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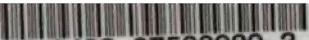
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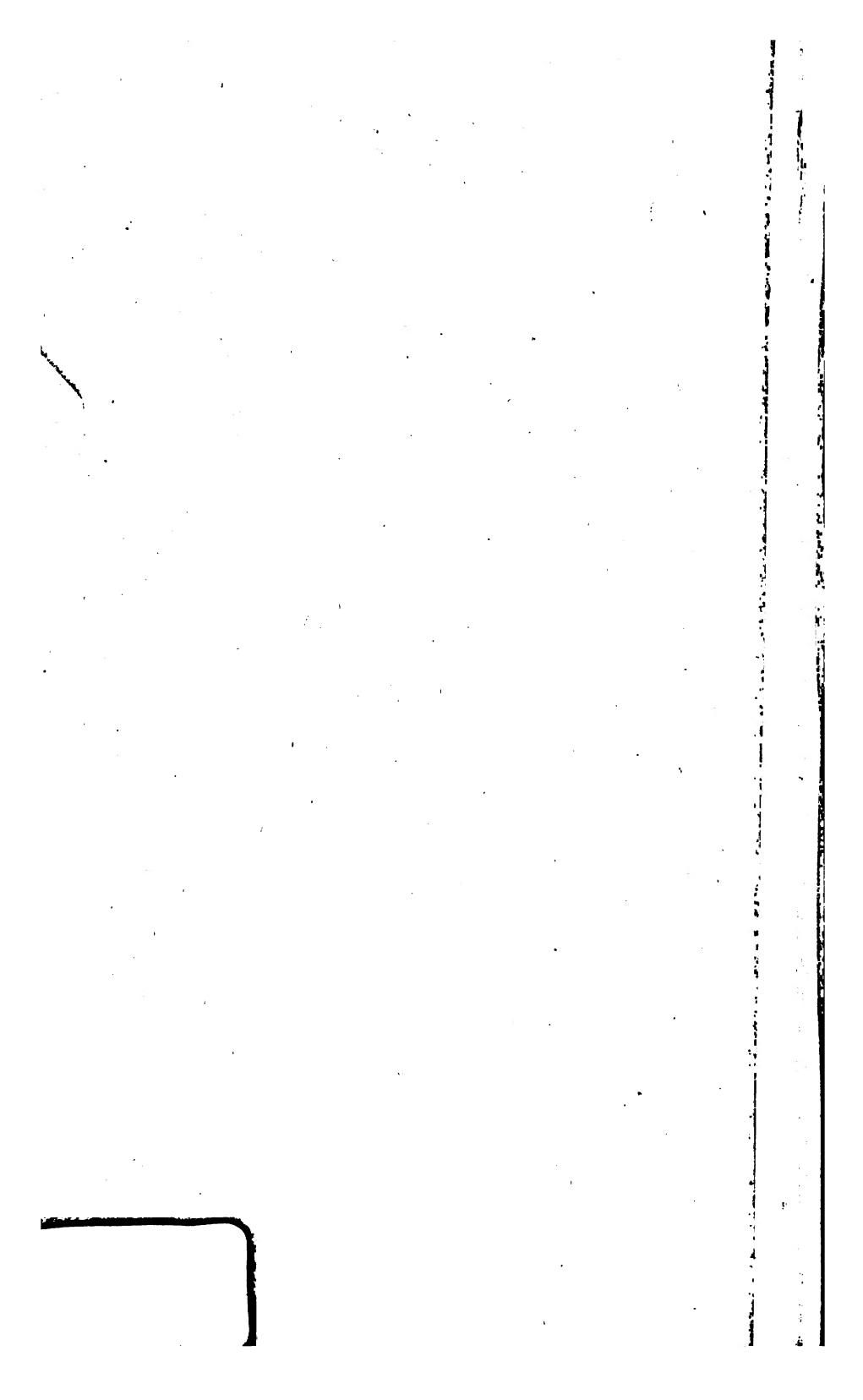
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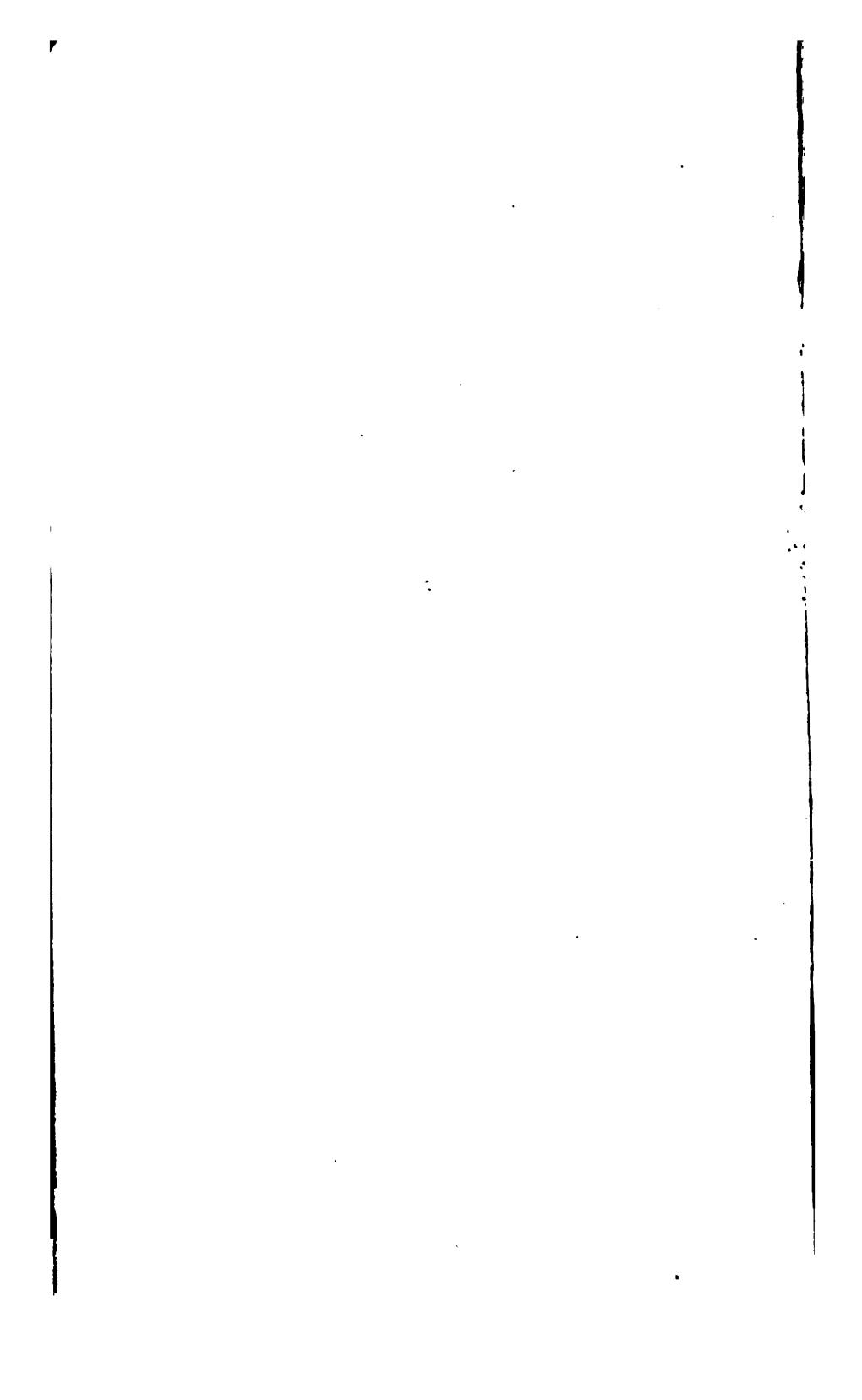
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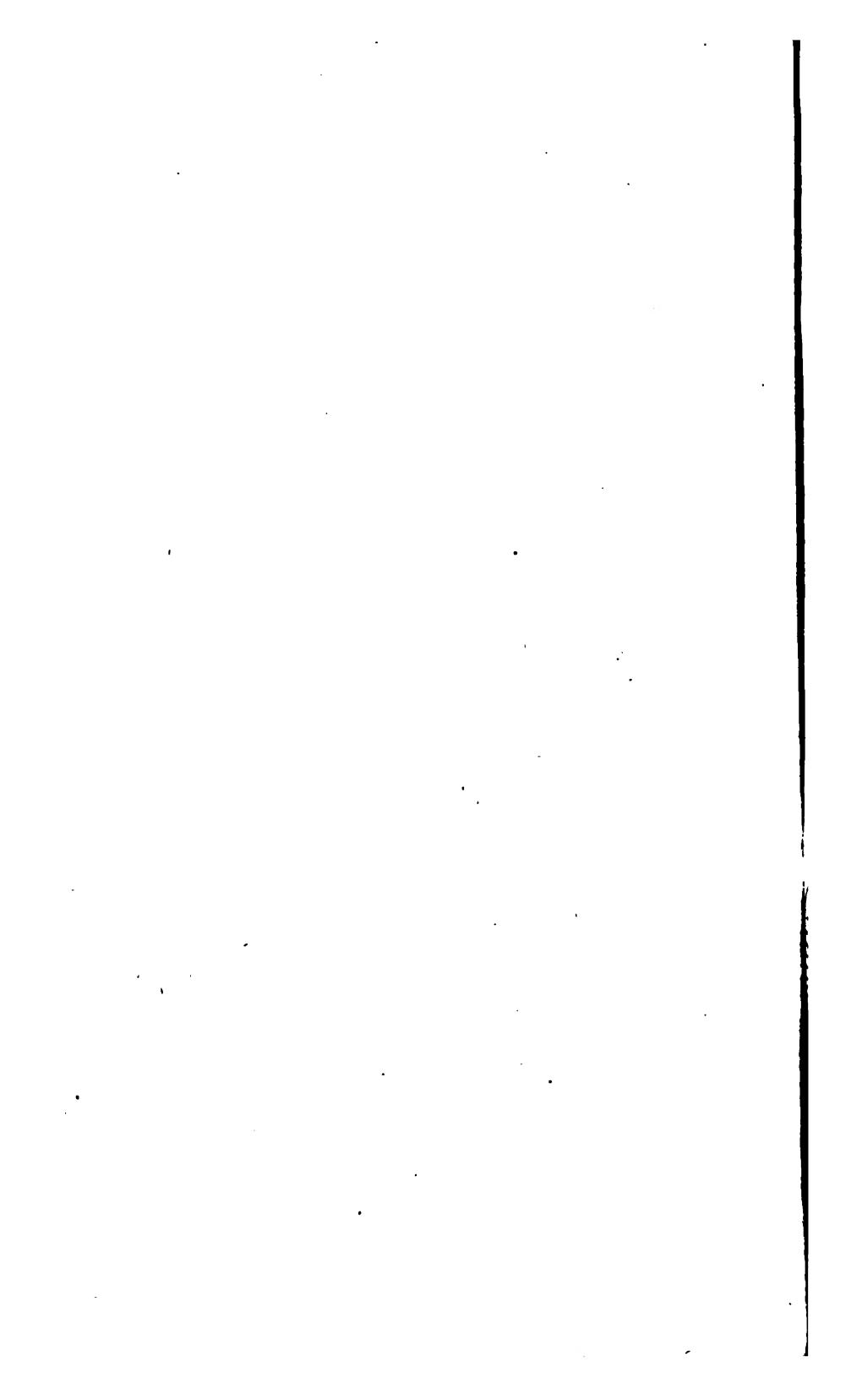
POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

F R E D E R I C H.

K I N G o f P R U S S I A.

V O L. VII.



C O R R E S P O N D E N C E.

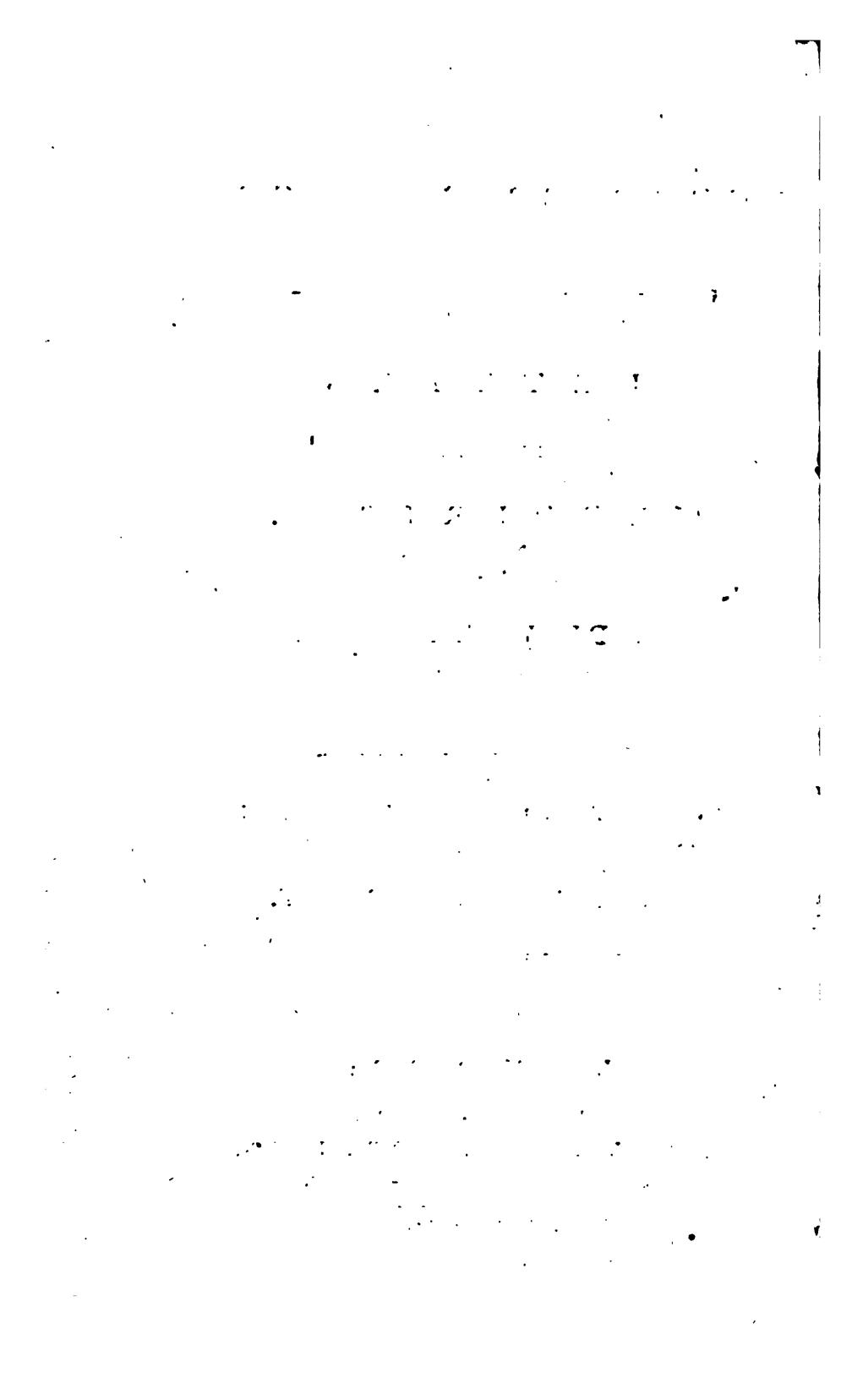
L E T T E R S
BETWEEN
F R E D E R I C II.
AND
M. DE VOLTAIRE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY
THOMAS HOLCROFT.



L O N D O N:
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L E T T E R S

B E T W E E N

FREDERIC II. AND M. DE VOLTAIRE.

L E T T E R CI.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Potsdam, Sep. 9, 1739.

I HAVE received two of your letters at once, that is to say of the 12th and the 17th of August; to which I now write in answer. The second act of Mahomet is likewise safely come to hand. It appears to me finely written, but, to speak frankly, less laboured, less finished, than the first. I ought to mention there is a verse in the first act of the propriety of which

VOL. VII.

B

I have

I have doubted. I know not whether it is customary to say *écraser des étincelles*.* I rather thought it necessary to write *eteindre*, or, *étouffer des étincelles*.†

Let me beg you to recollect that beautiful line—

“ And onward are we led to truth by doubt.”

However I am perfectly convinced that I am much more agreeably affected by the splendid poetry of your Mussulmen, than by the massacres which those infidels commit on our poor Germans, at Belgrade.

As when, with sulph'rous war, two fearful clouds
Obscure the summer skies, and menace earth,
Impell'd by winds, in their tempestuous course,
And darting thunder from their bursting sides,
Meet in the circumambient air with shock
Impetuous, making hell descend from heav'n,
Till Nature shudders at the fearful din,
Afraid lest Chaos should again usurp
Her elements, and trembling fits in dread,
While suff'ring earth to her foundation shakes—

So, when the demon Discord thirsts for blood,
Her sanguinary banners are display'd ;
Her victims wait till rage, destruction, death,
Have cast the die of victor and of vanquish'd.

* Crush the sparks.

† To extinguish, or, stifle the sparks.

Then do puissant armies, madly blind,
Infuriate run to murder, not in malice ;
The torrent's course the slaughter'd heaps impede,
And shrinking earth with horror drinks their blood ;
Hell laughing poisons Vict'ry with remorse,
And Heav'n their clamour echos back with groans.

What ! Shall the hideous brood of Acheron
Hurry whole nations to the hated field,
And drench their guilty hands in human gore !
Hark ! Whence those shrieks ? Heav'ns ! 'Twas the van-
quish'd dying !

Redd'ning in wrath, the Crescent terror glares,
And, strange reverse, the Roman eagles fly ;
The plain is burthen'd with expiring hosts ;
Death, meagre glutton, feasts, in fearful state,
On tribes in manners, form, and dwelling distant,
Far as the rising from the setting sun.

Alas ! Moldavia*, thy disastrous shores,
Aghast, are bathed in reeking purple tides ;
Thy fleeting waters bear their livid load
Of buoyant carnage into happier lands,
Spreading abhorrent terror as they pass.
Nor is the horrid scourge of war enough ;
Th' infectious crew, on war attendant, rush
To sweep away what ev'n in rage was spar'd ;
And lo ! Thy fragrant hills and fruitful vales
Plague, Pestilence, and Famine straight devour !

Like as mount Athos, whose foundations lie
Low as th' abyss of hell, his head in heav'n,
Boreas and Aquilo contemptuous views
Fierce storms collect, and bears them howl assault :

* The Berlin edition falsely reads Moravia. T.

To Fate dictating thus, and vain of power,
 Dead to human pangs, deaf to human woes,
 On courtly shoulders heaping kingly cares,
 To courtly hands confiding fire and sword,
 This monarch slumbers—That the torch of war,
 Slothful in his seraglio, bids to blaze.

Yes! Wretched rulers! Yes! Ye feed the flames.
 The demon HATED, and that demon more
 Infernal, mean, and despicable, SELF,
 Enslave and goad you on the tortuous path.
 Encumber'd by the lands ye govern ill,
 Ye covet more than mem'ry knows to name.
 Well then! Arise! Go forth and conquer worlds!
 But look the blood ye shed be all your own,
 Nor leave one orphan, nor one widow'd wife,
 To mourn a husband's or a father's fall.

This spacious earth, of men the common right,
 Where num'rous clans in num'rous climates dwell,
 Swarming in kingdoms, or apart in hordes,
 Distinct in habits, customs, manners, minds;
 As different in opinion as in form;
 These num'rous clans have still a gen'ral good,
 Which binds and bids them form one ample whole:
 They all have hearts, and all to love are prone.
 Infestate rancour! What! Are ye, alone?
 Are ye by angry Heav'n denied to love?

Weeping I view their love to hatred turn'd;
 Behold these brothers taught the dev'lish trade
 Of mutual murder: Arab, Tartar, Turk,
 Gen'rous and hospitable in nature each,
 Frugal Chinese, compassionate Gentoo,
 And ye proud Iroquois, despising pain,

Ye of Peru and Mexico, oppres'd,
 Where'er ye dwell, i'th' old world or the new,
 Are ye not men, and shall I not detect
 The horrid hellish arts that make ye fiends ?

Henceforth, oh Earth ! Thy errors and thy crimes,
 Thy pride, thy contests, and thy warr resounce !
 Free from alarms like brethren live, oh men !
 And oh ! to make ye blest, may all the Smiles,
 The Loves, the Pleasures, and the happy Arts
 That once ennobled Memphis, Athens, Rome,
 And Florence, quit again their native skies ;
 And in their train, oh ! Plenty, prodigal,
 And thou all prosp'r'ous Luxury, laughing come,
 With ev'ry sportive child that Fancy knows.

Oh ! come, enchanting Arts, illusive come,
 Your wiles, your spells, and potent charms display ;
 Modell'd by you let terror be transform'd
 To something irresistibly attractive.
 Thus do we see the glitt'ring precious ore,
 And diamond rare, that light emits from brow
 Of swarthy Soldan, or superb Mogul,
 By industry of man procur'd from gulph
 Profound, whence torrents storm, and dash from rock
 To rock, incav'd where thunder never reaches.

This is the gift, Voltaire, with magic touch
 Extremes to harmonize, and cause, while death
 And carnage glut the scene, th' ecstatic soul
 To gaze, moon-struck, on what it would abhor.
 Here massacres may only be endur'd,
 And pleasure here from mis'ry be deriv'd.
 'Tis for the poet's wondrous art to trace
 Of frantic Tyranny the barb'rous acts,
 The reign detested, and the tragic end ;
 And thus instruct the living by the dead.

Continue then, proud sons of Soliman,
To make the nations marvel at your deeds ;
Monimia, Mithridates, soon surpass ;
Recount your triumphs on the Gallic scene ;
Tread in the steps of Cæsar and Alzire ;
Assume of Mahomet the fierce demeanor ;
Rivals no less redoubted shall you have ;
But pleasure and success await your coming ;
Already I behold your beauties beam,
Behold ye crown'd with laurels, by Voltaire !

I send you at the same time the preface to the Henriade. Seven years are necessary for the poem to be engraved, but the English printer assures me it shall not be inferior in beauty to his Latin Horace. If you find any thing in the preface which ought to be altered or corrected, it depends only on yourself to make what changes you please; I should not wish to see a word unworthy of the Henriade or its author. I intreat, however, you would return me the original, or have it transcribed, for I have no other copy.

After a journey of some days, which I have to make, I shall seriously begin to give battle to Machiavel. You know study requires rest, and it is some months since I have been suffered to remain in tranquillity. I have been three times obliged to lay down the pen before I could finish this letter, and the work which I propose to write requires judgment and precaution, for which

which reason I have reserved it for the leisure of my philosophic retreat.

I perceive with pleasure that you lead a life almost as erratic as mine. Thiriot informs me of your arrival at Paris. I own that might I choose between the festivals which the French at present keep and those which were held in the time of Louis XIV. I should determine in favour of that banquet of which the mind partakes rather than the eye ; but I likewise know I should prefer the pleasure of conversing two hours with you to all these splendid wonders.

I am interrupted again ; the devil take such impertinence !

Here I am once more. You speak to me of great men, and of engaging them, in the language of an enlister. And do you also sacrifice to the gods of Prussia ? If the Parisians are addicted to pleasure, and are sometimes mistaken in the choice they make, we are here addicted to great men. Yes, great, measured by the yard ; and it might be said that, whoever has the misfortune to be born half a foot royal less than a giant, cannot, according to our rule of proportion, have common sense. I am but little learned on the subject, but, if what I have heard be true, neither Alexander nor Cæsar were tall. The prince of Condé, Turenne, the duke of

Marlborough, and prince Eugene, whom I have seen, and who were each of them justly entitled hero, were less splendid in appearance than in that strength of mind which found resources in itself, amid all dangers, and that exquisite judgment which taught them to decide with promptitude and success.

I am pleased, however, with this amiable mania of the French. I own I am delighted when I think that four hundred thousand inhabitants of a great city only busy themselves with the charms of life, and are almost unacquainted with its vexations. It is a proof that there are four hundred thousand happy people. It appears to me that every chief of society ought seriously to think of inspiring his subjects with content, if he cannot make them wealthy, for content may very well subsist without the support of great wealth. The man, for example, who sees himself at the playhouse, at some festival, or in a place where a numerous assembly inspires him with a certain kind of satisfaction, the man, I say, in such moments is happy, and returns home with his imagination full of the agreeable objects which are impressed upon his mind. Why therefore not refine still further, to obtain such pleasing moments, which soften all the bitterness of life, or which, at least, procure

cure intervals during which every grief of man is forgotten? Pleasure is the only real good, therefore to furnish society with the means of diversion is to do good in a very considerable degree.

It should seem that the world is of this opinion, for even in the neighbourhood of Nova Zembla, and on Hyperborean seas, there is no talk but of rejoicings. Our news from Petersburg abounds with nothing but balls, festivals, and banquets, given on the occasion of the marriage of the prince of Brunswick. I saw this prince with the duke of Lorrain, at Berlin, and saw him in a playful mood, which by no means spoke the monarch. They are two chiefs, however, who, I know not by what necessity, or what providence, appear destined to reign over the greatest part of Europe. Were providence all it is described to be, your Newtons, your Lockes, and your Voltaires, in fine, those beings who think the most, would be masters of this world. It would then appear that the infinite wisdom which presides over all accidents would, by a choice worthy of itself, have placed the wisest among men to govern their inferiors; but, according to the manner in which things are conducted, we might rather affirm every thing happened by chance.

A man

A man of merit is not esteemed according to his worth, another is not placed in his proper situation; a worthless fellow shall be called noble, and a man of the highest merit languish in obscurity. The reins of government in empires are committed to unskillful hands, and expert persons are kept at a distance. Men may say whatever they please on this subject, but they will never be able to bring one good reason in support of conduct so capricious.

I am chagrined that my fate has not stationed me in such a manner as that I might every day converse with you, might stammer some few phrases on philosophy with the marchioness du Chatelet, and that the country of the arts and sciences is not my country. Perhaps this trifling dissatisfaction has given birth to my complaints concerning providence; perhaps there is too much rashness in my doubts; but I cannot, however, persuade myself they are totally unfounded.

I entreat you would tell the beauteous Emily I shall this winter study that branch of philosophy which she patronizes, and that I beg she would warm my imagination with a ray of her genius. Do not forget me, dear Voltaire; let not the charms of Paris, your friends, the sciences, pleasure and the company of the fair, efface from you

your memory the person who ought to be there eternally fixed. I think I deserve a place in your heart from the esteem and friendship with which I ever shall remain,

My dear Voltaire,

Your indubitable friend.

L E T T E R CII.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

Paris, Sept. 1739.

I Received those two great consolations at Paris of which I had inost need in that immense city, where reign noise, dissipation, and the fruitless eagerness to seek for friends that are not to be found; where men live only for themselves; where a person suddenly finds himself surrounded by vortices more chimerical than those of Descartes, and less proper to conduce to happiness than the Cartesian absurdities are to teach us the secrets of nature. My two consolations were the two letters with which your royal highness honoured me, dated on the ninth and the fifteenth of August, which were sent to me at Paris.

On my arrival, the first thing necessary was
to

to answer numerous objections which I found dispersed through Paris against the discoveries of Newton. But this trifling duty, of which I have acquitted myself, did not suffer me to lose sight of Mahomet, the first part of which I have done myself the honour to send to your royal highness. I here send you two more acts. Were I to have waited till they were worthy to be presented to you, I must have waited too long. I send them as a proof of my anxiety to afford you pleasure; and, as a better proof, I shall begin to correct them. Your royal highness will perceive whether the horrors which accompany fanaticism are painted with strokes sufficiently bold and true. The unfortunate Saide (or Zaida) who imagined that to murder his father was to serve God, is no fanciful portrait. Such were Jean Chatel, Clement, Ravaillac; and what increases the horror is they were each of them sincere. Is it not therefore of service to humanity to distinguish, as I always have done, between religion and superstition; or do I merit persecution for having continually said, in a hundred different ways, that we never can do good to God by doing ill to man?

The suffrages, the kindness, and the letters of your royal highness, alone could be able to support me against the contrarieties which I have under-

undergone in my own country. I regard my life as the banquet of Damocles, at the table of Dionysius. The letters of your royal highness and the society of the marchioness du Chatelet are to me feasting, and music.

The sword of persecution, o'er my head
Suspended, the delicious banquet spoils,
Which in Apollo's temple sumptuous waits,
For me prepar'd by Frederic the divine !
Else would my muse, embolden'd by his song,
Melodious take new life and wing, and join
Her willing notes to his heroic strains !
But who e'er saw, beneath the vulture's gripe,
The tender philomela sing of love ?

Scarcely had I arrived at Paris before it was whispered to a great minister that I had written the history of his life, and that this satirical history would soon appear in foreign countries. The slander was quickly put to confusion, but it might have been fatal. Your royal highness is acquainted with the power of despotism, which you will never abuse. You can well imagine what is the situation of a man whose destruction a single word may effect, and this situation is continually mine. These are my rewards, after having employed twenty years in endeavouring to amuse, and sometimes perhaps to instruct, my nation.

But,

But, once again, your royal highness loves me, and I am far from having cause to complain. You have deigned to have the Henriade engraved, and what ill can be done me which will not be inferior to such an honour !

I have just purchased the works of Machiavel, that I may perfectly feel the force of your excellent refutation ; which I expect from what you intend at present to write ; but I believe there will be no better refutation of Machiavel than your own conduct. Men seem all to be employed at present in mutual destruction, and, from the empire of the Mogul to the straits of Gibraltar, all is war. It is supposed that France also will foot it in this vile Pyrrhic dance. And this is the season in which your royal highness teaches the doctrine of justice, previous to any exercise of your prowess ! May I be permitted to ask when I shall be so happy as to read these lessons of equity and wisdom ?

I have seen the sky-rockets which have been played off, at Paris, with so much pomp ; but it is my wish men should begin by building a fine town-hall, beautiful squares, convenient and superb market-places, and splendid fountains, before they indulge themselves in fireworks. I prefer Roman magnificence to such smoke. Not that I condemn the latter. God forbid that I should

should take offence at any of the pleasures of mankind. I only feel some regret for want of what we have not, while I partake of that which we have.

Your royal highness no doubt is informed that Buchardon and Vaucanson produce master-pieces, each in his kind. Rameau labours to bring Italian music into fashion. These are men worthy of living under Frederic; but I defy them to wish it so earnestly as I do.

I am, with the most profound respect, and tenderest gratitude, &c.

L E T T E R CIII.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Remusberg, Oct. 10, 1739.

I, As well as the public, have imagined that your reception at Paris was the best possible; that every body there would be eager to shew you civilities, and render you honour, and that your abode in that immense city would not be disturbed by any disagreeable vexations. I am sorry to find myself deceived on a subject which I had much at heart. It appears your fate resembles that of most other great men, who are

persecuted during life, and when they are dead adored as deities. The truth is that such a destiny, however bright its future splendor, depicts the time present under no very agreeable aspect. But these are occasions on which the mind should assume fortitude sufficient to repel fear, and to prepare for all accidents. The sect of the stoicks was never more flourishing than under the tyranny of bad emperors. And why? Because it was then necessary to despise pain, and death, before they could enjoy life in peace. May your stoicism, my dear Voltaire, at least be powerful enough to insure you unalterable tranquillity. Say with Horace, “ I envelope myself in “ my virtue.” If so it might be, what welcome should you not meet here! My house should be an asylum for you, against all the assaults of fortune; and it should be my study to procure happiness for the man whose works have added so much to the delights of my life.

I have received the two new acts of Zopyrus, which I have read but once, but I will answer for their success. I scarcely could forbear weeping while I read the scene between Zopyrus and Saide. That between Saide and Palmyra, when Saide is preparing to commit parricide, and that, likewise, in which Mahomet, speaking to Omar, feigns to disapprove the act of Saide,

are excellent. I own it appears to me that Zopyrus comes expressly to confess on the theatre, that he may die according to rule; and that the scene opening and shutting at the back of the stage, has rather a mechanical air; but I cannot judge till I have read again. The characters, the manners, and the art of moving the passions, discover the hand of that great, that excellent master who has written this piece; and, though it should happen to be true that Zopyrus does not come naturally enough on the stage; I imagine this is a blemish which might be overlooked in a perfect beauty, and which would not be remarked except by the old, who coldly examine with spectacles on nose what ought to be seen and felt with sudden transport. Your rejoicings at Paris have only gratified your sight. For my part, I wish for rejoicings in which the mind and all the senses may profitably partake. I think it would but be the pedantry of knowledge in pleasure to select subjects of instruction, and to confine their diversions within the limits of good taste. This would be to narrow the capacity the Creator has bestowed on the human mind, which can contain more than one kind of knowledge. It would be to render useless the work of a god who appears to be an epicurean,

so much care has he taken of the pleasures of man.

*Paint le luxe et même la mollesse,
Et les plaisirs de toute espèce;
Tout honnête homme a de tels sentiments.**

We have lord Baltimore and Algarotti here, who are on their return to England. This lord is a very sensible man, possessed of considerable knowledge, and one who thinks, as we do, that the sciences are not derogatory to nobility. I have admired the genius of the Englishman, like a handsome face seen through a veil. He speaks French very ill, yet there is a pleasure in hearing him speak; and he pronounces the English so fast that it is not possible to keep pace with him. He calls a Prussian a mechanical animal, and says that Petersburg is the eye of Russia, with which it looks toward polished countries; and that were it deprived of this eye, it would presently decline into that state of barbarity in which it so lately slumbered.

* "I love luxury, and even effeminacy; I love pleasures of every species, and believe all worthy men are of my mind." —The Bayeux edition adds—It was Moses apparently who said this; or, if not Moses, it was a man who would be a better legislator than this Jewish impostor, and whom I esteem a thousand times above that whole nation, superstitious, feeble, and cruel as it was. T.

He

He is a great partisan for the sun, nor do I think him much averse to the dogmas of Zoroaster. He has met with people here to whom he could speak without constraint, which occasioned me to compose the inclosed epistle, and which I beg you to correct without mercy.

You are acquainted with young Algarotti, who has pleased me beyond description. He has promised me to return as soon as possible. We have conversed largely, of you, of mathematics, of poetry, of all the sciences, of trifles, in fine, of every thing. He possesses much ardour, vivacity, and mildness, which to me are exceedingly agreeable. He has composed a cantata, which was immediately set to music*, and with which he was very well satisfied. We parted with regret, and I fear it will be long before I shall meet a man so amiable in these countries.

We this week expect the marquis de la Chetardie, to whom likewise we must bid a mournful adieu. I am unacquainted with this M. de Valori, but I have heard him spoken of as a man who has not the manners of polite life. They certainly might very well have omitted sending us M. de Valori, and depriving us of

*. Qu'on a mis en musique. The prince seems to insinuate he set it to music himself. T.

La Chetardie, who in every respect is a very agreeable gentleman.

Be persuaded that here at Rheinsberg we trouble ourselves as little concerning war as if no such thing existed in the world. I am at present at work on Machiavel, interrupted occasionally by the idly impertinent, the race of whom is not yet extinct, notwithstanding the thunderbolts hurled at them by Moliere. I refute Machiavel chapter by chapter, some of which are written; but I wait till the whole is finished before I begin to correct. You shall be the first who shall see the work, nor shall it quit my hands till it has been purified by the fire of your genius.

I am in expectation of your corrections for the preface to the Henriade, that I may make such alterations as you think proper; after which the Henriade shall be expedited with all possible speed.

I have built a tower, on the top of which I have an observatory. The lower story is a grotto, the second a chamber for philosophic instruments, and the third a small printing apartment. This tower joins my library by means of a colonnade, at the top of which is a platform. I send you the plan, for your amusement, till such time as your good citizens shall think proper to build a town-house and market-places in Paris.

I wait

I wait with much impatience for your letters, and intreat you will believe me as much your friend as man can be.

P. S. * Cæsario will not suffer me to be his interpreter; he rather prefers writing to you himself.

" Though nothing can add to the sentiments
 " of affection, or the perfect attachment I feel
 " for you, sir, it is notwithstanding past doubt
 " that, had it pleased my august master to depict
 " them, you would have been convinced of the
 " truth of what I say in a much more agreeable
 " manner. In knowledge I resemble a woman
 " whose youth and beauty are past, and who is
 " indebted for most of her charms to her dress.
 " Would she displease you undressed? I believe
 " not, and I dare boldly venture to shew to you
 " the naked friendship with which, during life, I
 " shall ever remain, sir, to you and yours, &c.

" KAYSERLING."

" I beg you will present every assurance of
 " my respect to the marchioness. Every wish
 " of my heart would be accomplished might I,
 " in the suite of my adorable master, travel to

* The above postscript is omitted in the Berlin edition, perhaps because it too forcibly painted the flattering, &c. character of the favourite. T.

“ Paris, while madame du Chatelet, the prince
“ of Nassau, and you, sir, contribute to em-
“ bellish that city. But be kind enough, sir,
“ to judge me by yourself. Should you be dis-
“ posed to quit the marchioness to come and
“ join us at Remusberg?”

LETTER CIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

Paris, October 18, 1739.

I SEND your royal highness the greatest monument that exists of your bounty and my fame. I never possessed true fame till the day you granted me your protection, and it is now at its height, from the honour which you have deigned to confer on the Henriade. Two sincere friends of mine, who are in Paris, have read this short prose essay, which is of more worth than all my poetry. They scarcely could retain their tears, when they beheld that there seldom was a line, which fell from your pen, that was not the offspring of a heart born for the happiness of mankind, and of a mind created for their instruction. They admired the energy with which

which your royal highness writes in a foreign language, they were astonished at the singularity of your taste for subjects concerning which so many of our princes have so little knowledge. This certainly struck them, but the sentiments of humanity which reign in that work captivated their souls. All they could promise was to keep the secret, as far as related to the preface ; but to be silent, not to speak in praise of the adorable prince who thinks with so much grandeur and benevolence, would be impossible. They were so much affected they could not but exclaim with me—

Rival of all the great and good, say, when
 Shall we behold thee, first of godlike men !
 Mirror of Christian princes ! But who ne'er
 Saw Christian prince that might with thee compare !

I have written nothing since the two last acts of Mahomet. I appear before my master with empty hands, but he must grant me his pardon ; my afflictions have again all overtaken me. Did the enemies who persecuted me know how much I suffer, I believe they would blush at their own envy and hatred ; for how might they envy the man whose every hour, almost, is marked by pain ; or why hate him who employs his intervals of ease only to render himself less unworthy of affording pleasure to those who love the arts and mankind ?

Madame du Chatelet will not depart for the Netherlands till toward the beginning of November, and I do not think my health would permit me to accompany her were she to go sooner.

I read Machiavel whenever my ill health and my studies will permit. I have the vanity to think that the most disgusting of the writings of this author is the chapter *Della Crudeltà*, in which this ingenious and political monster has the effrontery to say *Devo per tanto un principe non si curare dell' infamia di crudele**; and still more especially the 18th chapter, intitled, *In che modo i principi debbiano osservare la fede.*† If I might venture to speak what I think to your royal highness, who, in heart, mind, and rank, was assuredly born the judge of these subjects, I should declare that I find neither reason nor understanding in this chapter. It is a very excellent proof truly that a prince ought to be a villain, because Achilles, according to the fable, was fed by an animal half a beast and half a man. If indeed a fox had been the preceptor of Ulysses, there might have been

* A prince ought not greatly to regard the infamy that attends on cruelty.

† Of the manner in which princes ought to observe their contracts.

some justice in the allegory. But what conclusion can be drawn from Achilles, who is represented as the most impetuous and least politic of men?

In the same chapter he affirms it is necessary to be perfidious; *perche gli uomini sono tristi**; and a moment after he adds, *solo tanto semplici gli uomini che colui che inganna trovera sempre chi si lascera ingannare.*†

It seems to me that the preceptor of vice ought to be thus self-contradictory.

I have not yet received the notes of Amelot de la Houssaye; but what commentary can be necessary to my prince to discover the false, or to confound the unjust? Blessed be the day when his amiable hands shall have finished a work on which the happiness of man will depend, and which ought to become the catechism of kings!

I know not what reception the manifesto of the emperor against his general, and against his plenipotentiary, would meet with in this catechism. It is not for me to cast a glance so high.

*Pastorem, Tityre, pingues
Pascere oportet ovos, nec regum bella referre.*

* Because men are wicked.

† Mankind are so simple that he who wishes to deceive will always find those who will suffer themselves to be deceived.

I have

I have been visited by the son of M. Gramkan, who appears to me to be a young man of merit, worthy of serving and listening to your royal highness.

I hear nothing more of the journey which the baron von Kayserling was to make to Paris; I am afraid lest I should be gone without having seen a person with whom I should have passed whole days in speaking of a prince who does honour to humanity. Madame du Chatelet has written to your royal highness. I am with the most profound respect, and the most tender gratitude, &c.

L E T T E R C V.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Remusberg, Nov. 5, 1739.

I WAS as much mortified by the infirm state of your health as I was rejoiced by the satisfaction which you testify at reading my preface. I consign over the style to be criticised by every Zoilus on earth; yet, at the same time, persuade myself it will bear examination, since it contains nothing

nothing but truths to which every thinking man must necessarily assent.

The refutation of Machiavel, in favour of which you interest yourself, is finished. I am at present beginning with the first chapter, to correct, and, if possible, to render the work worthy of posterity. That I may not keep you in suspence, I send you a few morsels of this rough marble, which are not yet polished.

A week since, I sent the preface to the marchioness. You will receive the chapters in order, and corrected, when they shall be complete. Though I do not wish to put my name to the work, I yet desire, if the public should suspect the author, that it might not do me an injury. For this reason, I beg you would have the goodness frankly to point out whatever needs correction. You will perceive that any indulgence, in such a case, would be prejudicial and fatal to me.

I informed a certain person of my design to refute Machiavel, and this certain person assured me it was lost time, since the complete refutation of Machiavel's *Il Principe* might be found in the political notes on Tacitus, by Amelot de la Houssaye. This induced me to read Amelot, and his notes, in which I did not find what I had been taught to expect. Some of the maxims
of

of such dangerous and detestable politics are there refuted, but not the whole, as a work.

Where the style would permit me, I have mingled the pleasant and the serious, and have added some short digressions to those chapters which presented nothing very interesting to the reader. Thus the reasonings, which could not fail to inspire languor by their dryness, are followed by some historical or critical remarks, to keep the attention of the reader alive. I have been silent, wherever prudence told me silence was necessary; nor have I permitted my pen to endanger my tranquillity.

I am acquainted with numerous anecdotes of the courts of Europe, which certainly would have diverted my readers, but I should have composed a satire which would have been the more offensive by being true; and this is what I never will compose. I am not born to afflict princes; I would rather render them wise and happy.

In this packet you will find five chapters of Machiavel, the plan of Remusberg, which I have long been indebted to you, and some powders which will be excellent for your cholic; I use them myself, and they are of infinite service to me. They must be taken when going to bed, mixed with pute water.

Adieu, my dear, my ever ill, and ever persecuted

secuted friend; I leave you to take up my work again, and, with the same pen which wrote the eulogy on the incomparable author of the Henriade, to blacken the infamous and villainous character of the advocate of vice. But this pen may much more easily confound the corruptor of the human race than be able to praise the preceptor of mankind. Eloquence is afflicted when, having great things to say, she finds herself continually inferior to her subject.

My friendship to the marchioness, and my compliments to your friends, who should be my friends likewise, since they are worthy to be yours.

I am with all sincerity, and possible tenderness, my dear Voltaire, &c.

L E T T E R C VI.

From M. de Voltaire.

November, 1739.

BURN wand'ring Baltimore thy ship, no more
Land on Sarmatian or Moriscan shore;
Plough not the seas of Bengal or Peru——
Thou, Algarotti, eager to pursue,
Through various climes, a sage in early youth,
Wisdom and pleasure, poetry and truth,

Of

Of man, his present and his future doom,
At wanton Venice, or at beastly Rome,
At German feasts, French plays, court, cottage, cell,
In search ; asking of all what none can tell ;
Modern Diogenes, no more enquire :
Throw by thy lantern, let thy light expire :
A man is found ! An honest, great and good !
Mount Remus is the place of his abode.
A king of hearts ! To this fam'd mount repair,
Behold the sage, and end your travels there.
Him having seen, there's nothing more to see !
Heav'ns ! When shall I at this blest mountain be ?
Where justice, wit, philosophy, combin'd
With every virtue, form one mighty mind ?
Olympus, Sinai, Thabor, are o'ercast !
Their ancient radiance Remus has surpass'd !
No more of Phœbus' lyre, Jove's thund'ring nod,
Of present heroes, or of former gods ;
Effac'd are they, their fame and ancient rites ;
Lo ! Frederic comes ! The god in whom my heart delights !

I ask pardon, sir, of Sinai and Thabor. Hurrried away by my ardour, I have said more than I ought to have said. Neither have the thunder and lightning of Mount Sinai any relation to the philosophic life which is led at Mount Remus ; nor is there any existing dispute between the transfiguration on Thabor and the uniformity of your charming character. In fine, your royal highness must pardon enthusiasm, of which surely I might be permitted to have a little ; I who had but just read the beautiful epistle

epistle with which your French muse regaled lord Baltimore! I perceive my prince has treasured up the English language, as a part of his knowledge. *Dulces sermones cuiuscumque lingua.* I imagine this lord Baltimore must have been greatly surprised to see a German prince write French poetry to an Englishman. But what can be said? I am more surprised than he. I cannot interpret this miracle of nature. I once again ask how can it happen that any one should write so well in the language of a country which he never saw? For the love of God, sir, tell me your secret.

I too should send verses to your royal highness, if I durst. You should have had the fifth act of Mahomet, but it is not yet transcribed. The four first are now in a more polished state; if your fine genius found some satisfaction in that feeble sketch, I will venture to hope you will shew the same indulgence to the work when finished. You will no longer meet with certain repetitions, and certain loose unconnected lines, which were so many stumbling-blocks. You will see paternal love and the secret of the birth of the children of Zopyrus in a much more interesting and grand point of view. Zopyrus, ready to be assassinated by his children themselves, offers up his prayers for them only, and

is stabbed, by the hand of his son, while he requests the gods to grant him a sight of this son. Is fanaticism painted as you could wish? Have I well expressed the horror which Ravaillac, Poltrot, Clement, Felton, Salcede, Ehud, and I had almost said Judith, ought to inspire? For, in fact, what good king might not be in danger of assassination, were religion to teach us to kill the sovereign who might be supposed the enemy of God?

This is the first tragedy in which superstition has been attacked. Would it were sufficiently worthy to be dedicated to a prince who, of all others, can best distinguish between the worship of a being, infinitely good, and fanaticism, infinitely detestable!

I have lately seen other works, on very different subjects, but subjects more worthy of your royal highness: I mean a course of mathematics, by M. Clairaut, a young man who wrote a book on curves at the age of fourteen, and who has lately been, as your royal highness knows, to measure the earth at the polar circle. He treats mathematics as Locke has treated the human understanding. He writes with that method which nature employs; and, like as Locke followed the mind in all its relative ideas, he follows geometry in the same route, which men have

have taken for the discovery of the truths of which they stood in need. Thus it was the necessity which men were under to measure which, according to Clairaut, was and is the true master of mathematics. The work is not entirely concluded, but the beginning appears exceedingly easy, and consequently exceedingly useful.

But the most useful of these works, sir, is that of which I am in expectation, by the hand formed to render men happy.

I, poor creature as I am, am again going to my elements of Newton, of which a new edition is wanted at Paris. But this labour I shall reserve for Brussels. I am on the wing—I attend Emily and the dutchess de Richelieu to Cirey, whence I shall continue my journey into Flanders, &c.

LETTER CVII.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND.

Berlin, Dec. 4, 1739.

YOU promised me your new tragedy complete, and I now expect it with great curiosity

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and impatience. I have already been charmed by the first ardour of your immortal genius, and I judge of the finished Zopyrus by the beautiful sketch that I have seen. It is a St. John, who promises highly in behalf of the work which is to follow. I should be satisfied, yes, exceedingly satisfied, if during my whole life, I could write one tragedy like that of Mahomet, without correction. But every man is not permitted to visit Athens.

I submit the twelve first chapters of my Anti-Machiavel to your judgment, which, though they have been retouched, still abound in faults. You must be the supposed father of these children, by adding whatever the purity of the French language requires, before they appear in the presence of the public. I shall, in the mean time, correct the other chapters, and give them all the perfection I am capable of attaining. Thus do I exchange my feeble productions for your immortal works, much in the same manner as the Dutch truck their little looking-glasses for the gold of America; nay, and am very happy that I have any thing to barter.

The dissipation of the court and the city, necessary attentions, pleasures, indispensable duties, and occasionally teasing idlers, impede my work, and Machiavel is often obliged to give

give place to those who practise his maxims, and whom consequently I refute. We must comply with these decorums, which cannot be avoided; and, be our thoughts what they will, we must sacrifice to the god of custom, that we may not obtain the character of being singular and absurd.

This M. de Valori, who has so long been announced by the public voice, so often been promised by the gazettes, and so tediously detained at Hamburg, is at length arrived at Berlin. He has taught us highly to regret La Chetardie, and daily makes us perceive how much we have lost in the departure of the latter. Our whole conversation at present is a theoretical course of the wars of Brabant, and of the trifles and minutiae of the French army. I incessantly meet a man who imagines himself in the face of his enemy, and at the head of his brigade. I continually fear lest he should take me for a counterscarp, or a horn work, and should very impolitely make an attack. He is almost always troubled with the spleen. He has not the manners of polite life; he never sups, and it is said the head-ach respects him too much to incommod him, and that he never merits a visit from this guest.

We have lately acquired a very able man, and very famous in experimental philosophy,

whose name is Celius. He has received instruments to the value of twenty thousand crowns, and will this year finish a work which will do him much honour; a mechanical machine, that perfectly demonstrates all the motions of the stars and planets, according to the Newtonian system.

Perhaps you are not acquainted with a young man who begins to be known, and whose name is Lieberkuhn, who has an admirable mechanical genius. He has made astonishing discoveries in optics, and has carried his art to such a degree of perfection that he has surpassed all his predecessors. He is to return here this autumn, after having seen Paris. He has remained three years at London, and was greatly esteemed by all the learned of England. I will speak more particularly concerning him, when I have seen him after his return.

I am delighted at the sight of these happy products of my country; they resemble roses growing among briars and nettles. They are like sparks of genius, which are discovered among the embers under which, unfortunately, the arts are buried. In France, you live in all the opulence of these arts; here we are indigent in science, which may occasion us to esteem the little we have the more.

Perhaps

Perhaps you think me a prattler, but remember it is a month since I wrote to you, and that rain is never more abundant than when preceded by sterility.

I follow you to Cirey, dear Voltaire, and participate both in your pleasures and your pains. Profit by these pleasures as much as you are able, for so ought a wise man to do; enlighten us, but not at the expence of your health and your life.

When will these Voltaires and these Emilies travel northward? I fear such phenomena, though impatiently expected, will not suddenly appear. It shall not however be said that I have died and have not seen you, were I even obliged to carry you off. There is no adventure I would not rather undertake. Would not you be greatly astonished if, some night at Cirey, you were to see men arryie in masks, with torches, and a coach, and all thjngs necessary to bear you away? Such an incident would somewhat resemble that of the Pentecost, only that we should do you no harm, except by taking you from Emily, which I confess would be harm enough. I do not think that either you or Emily are born for chicanery; and, Paris happening to be on the road of the marchioness, judgment may chance to go by default.

Poor Cesario, still afflicted with the gout, has not struck his tent at Remusberg; and though I continually exert my claims, his disease will not suffer him to come. He loves you like a friend, and esteems you as a great man. Permit me to speak in his behalf, and to express what pain, and his present want of pleasure, will not suffer him to express himself.

I do not relate the nonsense of the town, the trifling news of the day, or the frivolities of the times. We ought not to depart from our horizon. I ought only to speak to you concerning yourself, or the marchioness. But I fear lest I should weary you, by being only the mirror, or the echo, of what must be admired in you. Present my compliments to the marchioness, and remain convinced that I love and esteem you as much as possible, and that I shall ever continue your very faithful friend,

L E T T E R C V I I I .

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

December 28, 1739.

WHAT can we wish in behalf of your royal highness, this year? You possess every thing

thing necessary for a prince, and more than sufficient for a private person, who should have his fortune to make by his talents. No, sir, I shall not wish for you, but, if so you will permit, for myself. You know the purport of these wishes,
Ut videam salutare meum.

I shall wish for the public, too; and that is that the public may see the refutation which my prince has made of the corrupter of princes. A few days since I received the twelve first chapters at Brussels. I had before eagerly read those which I had received in France. It is necessary for the good of mankind, sir, that this work should appear. The world must see the antidote presented by a royal hand. It is very strange that among the princes that have written, none of them have chosen such a subject, which, I will venture to affirm, it was their duty to do. No, their silence was tacit approbation. It was well worthy of Henry VIII. of England to write against Luther, and of James I, to dedicate a work to the child Jesus! At length, behold a work worthy of a prince! Nor can I doubt that an edition of Machiavel, with such an antidote at the end of each chapter, will be one of the most precious monuments of literature.

There are very few of what are called *errors*

against the custom of the language; and your royal highness will suffer me to perform my office, by adding dots to the i's. If your royal highness will deign to grant the petition I make, and if you will bestow this gift upon the public, my petition is that you will suffer me to write a preface, and to be your editor. After the honour you have done me, in causing the Henriade to be printed, you can add nothing, except by confiding the edition of the Anti-Machiavel to my care. My function, as it will happen, will be superior to yours. The Henriade may please some curious readers, but the Anti-Machiavel must become the catechism of kings, and their ministers.

Will you, sir, permit me to say that, according to the remarks of madame du Chatelet, may I venture to add according to mine also, there are some branches of this beautiful tree which may be lopt off, without injury to the trunk? Zeal against the preceptor of usurpers and tyrants has eaten up your generous soul, and has sometimes hurried you away. If this be a defect it is very like a virtue. The infinitely good God, it is said, infinitely hates vice. However, when we have politely abused Machiavel, we may afterward confine ourselves to reasoning. My proposal, which I submit to your judgment, may

may easily be accomplished. I shall wait for precise orders from my master, and shall keep the manuscript till he has permitted me to re-touch and dispose of it.

It is for your royal highness, hereafter, to send me French writings; I am only an ineffectual servant; I receive but do not give. I am making some emendations in the Machiavel of Asia. I am planing the knots out of Mahomet, the original sketch of which you have seen. I shall not here continue the history of the age of Louis XIV; I am somewhat disgusted with it, though it was my intention to write wholly in the moderate language of which your royal highness has seen a specimen: beside that I am at present without my manuscripts, and my books. I shall again apply myself a little to physics. Why am I not with such men as Celius, and others whom the fame of your merit has already drawn to Prussia?

I have been told that the ambassador so often announced was worthy both to dine and sup, but I perceive he deserves only to dine. I received a letter from Algarotti, dated London October 1st, which has lain three months for me, at Brusfels. Algarotti continues in astonishment at all he has seen at Remusberg. What a prince it is! exclaims he. He cannot recover from

from his surprise. Alas! Sir, why am not I Algarotti? Why is not M. du Chatelet Baltimore? Were I not with Emily I should die if I were not with you.

I am with the most profound respect and the tenderest gratitude, &c.

L E T T E R CIX.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR VOLTAIRE,

Berlin, Jan. 6, 1740.

THE reason why I deferred writing to you was nothing more than my unwillingness to appear with empty hands. I take this opportunity to send you five chapters of the Anti-Machiavel, and an ode on flattery, which leisure has permitted me to write. Had I been at Remusberg, you would have received the very dregs of my work; but it is impossible to make much progress amid the dissipation of Berlin.

The Anti-Machiavel does not deserve to be announced in my name to the king of France. This sovereign has so many good and great qualities, that my writings are by no means necessary for their developement. Beside, I wrote freely, and spoke of France as of Prussia,

England, Holland, and all the powers of Europe. It is proper that the name of an author should be unknown, who writes only for the love of truth, and who consequently puts no shackles on his thoughts. When you shall have read the conclusion of the work, you will agree with me that prudence requires the name of the author should be buried in the discretion of friendship.

I am not interested, and if I can but serve the public I shall labour without the expectation either of reward or praise; like those unknown members of society who are as obscure as they are useful.

My period at court being over, my period for study will come. In a fortnight, I hope to lead that sage and peaceful life in which you so much delight, and I then propose to put the last hand to my work, and to render it worthy of after ages. I estimate my labour at nothing, for it is but of short duration; but the produce of that labour I estimate at much, for it is intended to survive me. Happy the writers who, aided by a luxuriant imagination, and guided by wisdom, are able to compose works worthy of immortality! They will do more honour to their age than Phidias, Praxiteles, and Zeuxis, did to the age in which they lived. The industry of understanding is much preferable to the

the mechanical industry of art. A single Voltaire will do more honour to France than a thousand pedants, a thousand half wits, and a thousand great men of an inferior order.

I repeat truths which I cannot avoid repeating; like as you cannot avoid maintaining the principles of preponderating weight, or the doctrine of attraction. One truth equals another, and all truths ought to be published.

The devotees here are raising a dreadful storm against those whom they call miscreants. False zeal is the madness of all countries; and I am well persuaded would turn the brain of the most rational, into which it should find admission.

But what is most pleasant, when the vertigo seizes on a whole society, no person is allowed to remain neuter; each man is required to take one side or the other, and to enlist under the banner of fanaticism. This, for my own part, I own I shall not do. I shall remain satisfied with composing some psalms to give a good opinion of my orthodoxy. Waste a few of your moments, dear Voltaire, after the same manner; and with a sacred quill scribble a few of your harmonious and melodious rhymes. Socrates offered incense to the Penates. Cicero, who cannot be accounted one of the credulous, did the

the same. It is necessary we should comply with the whims of silly people to avoid blame and persecution; for, after all, the most desirable thing in this world is to live in peace. In the company of fools let us be foolish; that we may attain this state of tranquillity.

I hear of Bernard and of Greffet as of the authors of great works. I am told of poems which do not appear, and of pieces I believe destined to die incognito, without having seen the light of day. These young poets are too idle for their age; they wish to gather laurels without giving themselves the trouble to seek them, and are satisfied with the most insignificant harvest of fame. How great is the contrast between their indolence and your laborious activity! I affirm that two years of your life are worth sixty of those of Greffet or Bernard. I will go farther, I will affirm that twelve thinking beings, who think deeply, will not, in a given time, furnish a quantity equal to you. But this is one of the gifts which Providence bestows only on men of great genius. May that Providence shower its best gifts upon you; that is to say, may it strengthen your health, that the whole world may long profit by your talents and your writings. In these no person, dear Voltaire, takes so much interest as your friend, who is, and

ever.

ever will remain, with all that esteem which no one can refuse you, &c.

LETTER CX.

From the Prince Royal.

Berlin, January 10, 1746.

THE former fame of France thou haft increas'd,
For which a childish, old, ungrateful priest
Gives thee his benediction * : this, I've heard,
A mode of punishment might be, but not reward !

I have read your short work on the age of Louis the Great. Were this prince living, you would be loaded with honours and rewards; but in the present age it should seem that good taste, as well as the old cardinal, is in its dotage. Lord Chesterfield said, in the year 25, that the world was gone mad; and in the year 40, the world ought in my opinion to be sent to Bedlam. After the vexations and persecutions you have endured, no person can think of writing; every thing will be criminal, every thing condemn-

* The Basil edition, perhaps more correctly but less pleasantly, reads—*has banished thee.* T.

nable;

nable; there is no longer either innocence or freedom for authors. Still, however, I conjure you, by all the influence I may have over you, by the divine Emily, and for the love of your own glory, to finish the incomparable history, the commencement of which you have intrusted to me.

Heed not though Envy yelp and prate,
Or holy Father fulminate;
Wild Fancy's Phantom, that, of yore,
Our foolish ancestors t'adore
Were idly prone, and who declares
He understands all heav'n's affairs,
Though few regard what now he says.

Heed not the Bigot's blame or praise ;
Should Zeal and Spleen their fury vent,
Contemn their curses impotent.

Laugh at th' octogenarian rage
Of him who, in declining age,
Priest, statesman, cardinal is seen,
The heir of artful Mazarin ;
Who keeps vile Machiavel in view ;
In speech a sophist ; ever true
To interest, while through crooked ways,
Fallacious lures and falsehood's maze,
He seeks to grasp the balance held
By Albion proud, who has compell'd,
That Europe might in safety sleep,
The Austrian and the Gaul to keep
Such equilibrium as restrains
Excess of pow'r, and peace maintains.

Heed

Heed not the furious prelate's rage ;
 Heed not though Vice and Folly wage
 Incessant war ; in their despite,
 Honour thy country still, and write.

When holy liars have display'd
 The sacred tricks in which they trade,
 Or when t' increase their silly feft,
 Saint Medard's miracles they act,
 Let Louis stretch the hand of pow'r :
 But never let the monarch low'r
 On those superior minds that glow
 With all the wisdom they bestow !
 Those legislators of mankind,
 Who captivate the heart and mind !

Son of the Graces, friend of truth
 And freedom from thy earliest youth,
 Exert thy pow'r, nor live in dread
 Though thunders rumble o'er thy head !
 Gresset nor Bernard imitate,
 Nor let thine ardour once abate ;
 In indolence let them remain ;
 Be thou our monarch, write and reign !

Though killing blights, in evil hour,
 Wither the choicest sweetest flow'r,
 Buds newly blown, that Flora views,
 And smiling sheds her richest dews,
 Yet, while the gard'ner looks and sighs,
 He hopes a still more beauteous prize ;
 Again he tills the teeming earth,
 And flow'rs more fair again take birth !

Amid the ravages must man advance
 Of angry Time, and adverse Chance.

Revenge

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E.

Revenge thyself, Voltaire, and shew
Thou'rt an unconquerable foe ;
End but the work thou hast begun,
The world shall own the battle won !

This will appear to be the advice of self-interest, and such I will frankly own it to be. I have taken infinite pleasure in reading the history of Louis XIV. and earnestly desire to see it finished. The honour you will hereafter acquire by the work will greatly overbalance the chagrin you at present suffer from persecution. We must not be so easily repulsed. A man of your order ought to know that to leave the history of Louis XIV. imperfect would be to occasion a bankruptcy in the republic of letters. Recollect that Cæsar, while combating the waves of the sea, held his commentaries with one hand over his head, that he might preserve them for posterity.

How can you speak of my feeble productions, after having mentioned your own immortal works ? It is my duty, however, to render you an account of my studies. The approbation you bestowed on the five chapters of Machiavel, which I sent you, encourages me to finish the four last. Were I at leisure you should soon have all the Anti-Machiavel, with my corrections and additions ; but I am only allowed to write at intervals.

Buried in doing nothing, Time,
 That old knave, steals away my prime.
 The frosty hand of coming age
 Those boiling passions doth assuage
 Which early youth to act compell'd,
 And in impetuous transports held.
 Dull forms and ceremonies slow,
 By Order led, with stately bow
 And measur'd step, devoid of grace,
 Of former pleasures now take place.
 Thus, while to pride and pomp, unwise,
 I pay this punctual sacrifice,
 Mode, custom, and set-speech controul,
 And blunt the feelings of the soul,
 My languor and my spleen increase,
 And leave old Machiavel in peace.
 But soon again I hope to meet
 Delights so rational, and sweet ;
 Returning to those happy plains
 Where cheerful pleasure fearless reigns !
 Where mirth that best of wealth bestows
 Which bloated grandeur never knows !
 Where freedom can that quiet give
 For which alone the wise would live !

The chapters of Machiavel are copied by one
 of my secretaries, whose name is Gaillard. His
 writing greatly resembles that of Cesario. Poor
 Cesario ! I wish he were able to write ! But the
 pityless gout attacks him in every limb, and for
 two months past has given him no respite.

In pain's despite, with garlands crown'd,
 The smiles by his bedside are found ;

But snarling Gout again appears,
And soon the smiles are chang'd to tears !
Poor Cupid in a corner stands,
With useless bow, and idle hands ;
His weeping mother still adores,
While he their mutual loss deplores !
Bacchus attempts to ease his pain,
With copious tears of brisk champagne ;
And grieves a champion thus should yield,
Who leaves reluctantly the field !
His favourite nectar Momus quaffs,
And at their noisy clamours laughs.
“ Your godships are, says he, but Turks !
“ Impostors ! Nay, behold your works !
“ But let the youth who weeping lies,
“ Hereafter shun you, and grow wise.”

I believe that your gentlemen Laplanders have been civil enough to send us some of the subjects of *Æolus* that have escaped from their caverns, and whom we could very well have done without. I will write to Algarotti that he may pack off some beams from his country hither; for nature, at bay, appears to be in indispensable need of a detachment of heat to restore her to life.

If my powder should once more restore you to health, I will, from that moment, hold the god of Epidaurus in greater reverence than the Delphic deity. Why can I not contribute both to your satisfaction and your health ? Why can I not render you as happy as you deserve to

be? Some people in this world have the power without the will; others the will without the power. Be satisfied, dear Voltaire, with the will, and with all those sentiments of esteem with which I remain, &c.

LETTER CXI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

Brussels, Jan. 26, 1740.

I RECEIVED your chapters of the Anti-Machiavel, your ode on flattery, and your letter in verse and prose, which either the abbé de Chaulieu or count Hamilton certainly dictated. For a prince to write against flattery is as strange as for a pope to write against infallibility. Louis XIV. never could have sent such an ode to Boileau, and I much doubt whether Boileau could to Louis XIV. The only favour I have at present to beg of your royal highness is not to understand my praises as flattery. Whatever I say flows from the heart. My approbation of your works, and my thanks for your kindness, alike escape me, you therefore must pardon them.

I am not entirely banished, as has been affirmed.

Mischief in heart may well remain
Of him who lately filch'd Lorraine !
But, though the subtle priest may hate,
Exile is not yet my fate.
My sins are not to be forgiven :
I've libell'd monks, and slander'd heaven !
Sinner unsanctified am I,
That laugh when holy jugglers cry !
Nay, I have taunting mock'd at Rome ;
And purgatory is my doom !

The fact is, however, no person has spoken of Rome with more caution than I have done. It should seem we must not speak at all. There is an excess of the ridiculous and of dotage in this persecution, which rather excites my laughter than my complaints.

When, on the one part, I behold the wretched attempt to protect Dantzic ; when I see incertitude in a thousand instances ; a war, fortunate by chance, undertaken in self despite, and into which we were forced by the queen of Spain ; the marine for ten years neglected ; government annuities * abolished, and the annuitants plundered, in defiance of public faith ; and when, on the other, I contemplate the hall of Hercules, which the good man regards as his apotheosis, I exclaim

* Rentes viageres.

Alcides-Fleuri, short, decrepid priest,
 That in the world he might not seem the least,
 In character resolv'd to be pourtray'd
 Like Hercules, an 'twere but masquerade !
 The people star'd ! Though he might spin, they swore,
 They ne'er Alcides drivelling saw before !

I well know that things equally contemptible, and even more so, are seen in all countries. I well know that to remain peaceably at home, and to send our generals to prison for having done all they were able to do, and our plenipotentiaries for haying, according to orders, concluded a necessary peace; this, I say, is I well know not a whit better. *Tutto 'l mondo e fatto come la nostra famiglia**. My conclusion is that, since the world is thus governed, it is requisite that the Anti-Machiavel shou'd appear. In times of pestilence, the presence of a Hippocrates is required. I have the twenty-third but not the twenty-second chapter, and your royal highness apparently has not written the twenty-fourth, I know not whether you have said any thing of the project *di cacciare i barbari d'Italia* *. It seems to me that there are at present so many well-behaved foreigners in Italy that to drive them out would be rather uncivil. Cardinal

* We do but as others do.

† Of driving the barbarians out of Italy,

Alberoni had an excellent plan, which was to form an Italian body nearly on the same plan as the Germanic body is formed. But when such projects are conceived it is necessary the author of them should not stand single, or he will be in danger of resembling the abbé de Saint Pierre.

It is with good reason that your royal highness thinks men like Greffet and Bernard indolent. Instead of saying to them, *Vade piger ad formicam**, as Solomon has said ; I should say, *Vade piger ad Fredericum*. Greffet, however, piques himself on his honour; and has lately given the world a tragedy of which I have heard much good. Bernard recited a canto of his Art of Love to me, at Paris, which I thought more gallant than that of Ovid.

For my own part, sir, I am so much disgusted with the fifth act of Mahomet that I dare not send it you. But, if it can amuse you, I will send you the comedy of the Devotee ; and, that you may have variety, I earnestly intreat your royal highness to cast an eye over the metaphysics of Newton, which I intend to add to the new edition of my elements, which is soon to be published.

I have never yet had the satisfaction to see my works correctly printed. I might profit by my

* Go to the ant, thou sluggard.

stay at Brussels to publish an edition of them ; but Brussels is the abode of ignorance. There is not one good printer here ; not one engraver ; not one man of letters ; and, were it not for madame du Chatelet, I should have no person to converse with, on literary subjects. This country is beside the country of obedience ; the pope has a nuncio here, but no Frederic.

Madame du Chatelet presents her respects to you, in which, sir, permit me to join, with compliments of condolence in addition to your charming verses on the gout of the baron von Kayserling ; but the hope that I shall one day see your royal highness affords me support.

L E T T E R CXII,

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Berlin, Feb. 3d, 1740.

I SHOULD have answered you sooner if the disagreeable circumstances under which I am at present would have permitted. Notwithstanding the little time which I can call my own, I have found means to finish the work on Machiavel, the beginning of which you have received,

ceived, and I now send you the continuation of my labours, intreating that you would return your remarks. I am determined to revise and correct, without respect for self-love, every thing you shall think unworthy to be presented to the public. I have spoken too freely of all great princes for me to suffer the Anti-Machiavel to appear under my name. I have therefore resolved, when it shall be corrected, to have it printed as an anonymous work. Fall without pity, therefore, on every satirical allusion which you think superfluous, and do not suffer a single fault against grammatical purity to escape.

I wait impatiently to see the tragedy of Mahomet finished, and retouched. I have seen it at its first rising; what will it be at broad noon?

So you are returned to your philosophy, and the marchioness to her law-suit! Really, my dear Voltaire, you are neither of you in your proper place. We have a thousand philosophers in Europe; but no poet, no historian, in any degree, your equal. Normandy itself has a hundred marchionesses at law, but not one who applies herself to philosophy. Let me intreat you to apply to your history of Louis XIV. and send for your manuscript and books to Cirey, that there may be no delay.

Valori said you were banished France, as a
pertur-

perturbator of the catholic religion, and I answered that he was a liar. I wish the old Machiavel, bound in Roman purple, would assign Berlin as the place of your exile. My desires all center in Remusberg, as yours do in Cirey. I sigh to return and salute my household gods.

Poor Cesario continues ill, and cannot answer you.

An age of torments are three months disease !
The suffering soul has little hope to please ;
Its pow'r benumb'd can scarcely life detain :
Or, if it live, it only lives in pain.
Sweet are the sounds that tremble on thy lyre,
And more than pharmacy might health inspire ;
But not those dulcet sounds can move that mind
Which Sicknes, stern-ey'd Pain, and pale Grief bind ?
In vain to write would poor Cesario try ;
Eagle encag'd as well might hope to fly.

Console me, dear Voltaire, by sending your charming works. You will call me insatiable, but I am like those persons who, having much acidity in the stomach, have need of nutriment more frequently than others.

I am glad Algarotti does not lose all recollection of Remusberg. It is a place at which men of genius will never be forgotten, and at which I do not despair of seeing you. We have just been treated with the sight of a little bear in petticoats, a Russian princess, whose only mark

of humanity is her dress. She is the daughter
of prince Cantemir.

Be pleased to give the marchioness my letter,
and remain satisfied that the esteem I have for
you will never end.

L E T T E R CXIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

COURTIERS and forms and grandeurs are adjourn'd,
And you, 'tis said, to Ruppin are return'd;
Where you, escap'd from flattery's dangerous charms,
With dalliance blest, recline in virtue's arms.

The gazettes say your royal highness keeps
house there, where there is no doubt a stall for
Pegasus, which appears to me the horse you
mount oftenest. You are astonished, sir, that
my weak state of health has left me sufficient
force to write some works of mediocrity, and I
am more surprised that the situation in which
you have so long been has left you sufficient
freedom of mind to perform things so singular.
To write poetry, when I have nothing to do,
does not terrify; but to write poetry so well,
in a foreign language, and at so violent a crisis,
is very much beyond my powers.

In

In sportive mood, you now regale
Your hearers with poetic tale ;
Anon, more grave, in godlike song,
The moral theme swells loud and strong !
To govern form'd, and form'd to please,
'Tis yours alone, with equal ease,
T' assume or to relinquish state,
And win in small things, as in great.
Rulers there are, and many such,
Of whom I cannot say so much.

I have not the works of Boileau here, but I recollect that he employs two lines to translate the verse of Horace.

Tantalus a labris fitiens fugientia captat
Flumina.

You, who are the Boileau of princes, translate it in one ; but so much the better, it is the more strong and energetic : I love to perceive in you *imperitoriam brevitatem*.

The Germans are not in general reproached with brevity of style. And here, let me just observe that, having done myself the honour to prove you have this trifling advantage over Boileau, it is not surprising that I should tell you, in all humility, your epistle contains many lines which I should have been very proud to have written. Your royal highness understands the art of expressing yourself as well as that of being happy under all situations. It is said here that

that his majesty is entirely recovered; the prayers
of your virtuous heart have been heard.

You will ever say like Horace

Nave ferar magna, an parva ferar, unus et idem:

Once more, fair Science, Pleasure, Friendship, haste,
With you the sweets of solitude to taste.
From Remus wisdom learning, kings shall own,
Where'er you fix your seat, there stands a throne.
With you the Virtues reign, with them the Arts;
Subdued your passions are; subdued our hearts!
No richer diadem you need to bear;
Vice only such poor trappings ought to wear.
How many stilted dwarfs, whom crowns adorn,
By flattery heroes call'd, seem giants born!
While dazzled Folly only knows to gaze,
And while Ambition slavish homage pays,
They're shunn'd and pitied by the truly wise,
Who turn to Remusberg their ravish'd eyes!

I have sent off a large packet, sir, for that
delightful retreat, of greater worth than any
thing I could send of my own, to your royal
highness, which is the Leibnitian philosophy of
a French lady, become a German because of her
attachment to Leibnitz, and still more because
of her attachment to you.

The present is a period during which I could
heartily wish to see a second volume of the senti-
ments of a certain member of the English par-
liament

liament on the affairs of Europe. It seems to me that those of England, Sweden, and Russia, will merit the attention of this worthy citizen. We see Sweden, formerly so threatening, become circumspect, embarrassed by fears for her freedom, and undecided between the money of France and England, like the ass of Buridan between two bundles of hay. But will not the citizen of whom I speak send me any commission relative to the Anti-Machiavel? If it be intended for the gratification of the public, there is so little to do that editorship only is necessary: your genius has accomplished every thing. The remainder can only be adjusted by printing the text of Machiavel and the answer in parallel columns; and this will not make too large a volume.

I wait your orders in all things, except to admire you.

It is afflicting that the gout should seize the hand of the baron von Kayserling, when it was his intention to write to us.

Poor youth, whom Frederic's friendship cannot save!
To whom, long since, my willing heart I gave!
This is a double proof of Fortune's spite;
I am denied to read, for he's denied to write.

Permit the Henriade, sir, once again to
thank

thank you for the honour you have done it,
and humbly to say with Statius

*Nec tū dīvinam Aeneida tenta,
Sed longē sequore et vestigia semper adora.*

In garb less splendid, humbler be my fame,
I dare not emulate great Virgil's name.

I am with the most profound respect and the
tenderest gratitude, &c.

L E T T E R CXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

February 23, 1740

I DID not receive the packet of your
royal highness, dated on the third, till the twenty-fifth, in which I find the cornice of the edifice
in which each sovereign ought to wish that he
had placed a stone.

You allow, you even command, me to speak
freely; and you are not among the number of
those princes who, after having desired to hear
the truth, are angry at having been obeyed. I
am fearful, on the contrary, lest your love of
truth should hereafter be in some degree tinged
with vanity.

I love

I love and admire the principles of the work, to which I shall boldly add that, in my apprehension, some of the chapters are too long. *Transverso calamo signum* will presently remedy the evil, and the thread of gold will become more compact, and acquire superior weight and brilliancy.

You begin most of the chapters by relating the substance of the discourse of Machiavel in the chapter which you intend to refute. But if your royal highness means the text of Machiavel and the refutation should be printed together, might not these introductions be superseded? Though they would be absolutely necessary were your work to be printed separately. It likewise seems to me that Machiavel sometimes earths himself in one hole, while you are digging in another. Thus, for example, in the third chapter he has these abominable words, *Si è a notare; che gli uomini si debbono o vezzegiare o speguere; perche si vendicano delle leggieri offese delle gravi non possono.**

Your royal highness endeavours to show how odious this satanic maxim is, but the accursed Florentine only spoke of the useful. Will you permit a short observation to be added to this

* It is to be observed that men ought either to flatter or stab; because the man who is slightly offended may avenge himself.

chapter, to prove that Machiavel himself ought not to have regarded these threats as justified by facts? During his own times the usurper Sforza was assassinated in Milan; another usurper of the same name was confined at Loches, in a cage of iron; a third usurper, our Charles VIII. had been obliged to fly from Italy, which he had conquered; the tyrant Alexander VI. died by the poison which his own hands had prepared, and Cæsar Borgia was assassinated. Machiavel was surrounded by examples of the fatal consequences of vice. Of this your royal highness speaks in other places. Do you think it will be proper to notice it here? Is not this the best opportunity? I appeal to your judgment.

Hercules must tell us the manner in which Antæus is to be strangled.

I present my prince with a little plan for a preface, which I have sketched out; if it shall please you, sir, to frame my rude drawing, and send me your ultimate orders, I will make every preparation for an edition of a book which must contribute to the happiness of mankind.

M. de Valori does me great honour to imagine I have been treated like Socrates and Aristotle, and that I am persecuted for having maintained the truth, in opposition to the silly superstition of men. I will, however, endeavour to behave in

such a manner as not to become the martyr of truths of which the world in general is unworthy. This would be like attempting to fix wings on the backs of asies, that would reward me with kicks.

I have ordered Mahomet to be copied, since it is the wish of your royal highness. I know not whether the piece will ever be represented; but what matters it to me? I have written it for those who think like you, and not for our foolish Parisians, who are unacquainted with any thing but love intrigues, which have been baptised tragedies.

I imagine your royal highness will immediately receive the tragedy of Gresset, in which I am told there are some very fine lines.

The marchioness du Chatelet sends you her respects. She is making an abridgment of Wolf. This is like geographers who reduce the earth to a globe of two feet diameter; and, for my part, I am better pleased to travel over the world, on such a globe, than to journey from Paris to Quito, and from Quito to Pekin.

My ill health has not suffered me yet to finish the abstract of the metaphysics of Newton, and the new elements on which I am at work. I am in pain three parts of the day, and during the fourth I do little of what I ought to do.

As

As soon as I shall finish these metaphysics, if I can but obtain a little respite from disease, be certain, sir, I shall obey your commands, and finish the age of Louis XIV. It gives me pleasure, because it bears some resemblance to the age to which you will give birth. With respect to the age of the cardinal, I shall leave it untouched; it is sufficient for him that he exists his century. Not long since the nephew of Chauvelin wrote to that ambitious hermit that the cardinal was on the decline, and that he put on rouge to conceal the paleness of his complexion. The cardinal, who knew this, caused the same nephew to rub his cheeks, and shewed him that his rouge was the offspring of health.

When will that vile gout take leave of the Baron von Kayserling? I am, &c.

L E T T E R C X V.

From the Prince Royal:

DEAR VOLTAIRE,

Berlin, Feb. 26, 1740.

I CAN only write a word in answer to your very witty letter. My present situation so

greatly contracts my mind that I have almost lost the faculty of thinking.

I.

Wide stand the gates of death, tow'rd which impell'd,
 In agonizing torment held,
 A Sire rever'd I view !
 To every pang a flood of tears is due !
 Nor apathy can wisdom teach ;
 'Tis what philosophy can never reach.

II.

Thus some huge oak, the forest's ancient pride,
 That many a storm has brav'd,
 When tempests in declining age,
 Rude and unabating in their rage,
 His withering honours rend,
 (How sturdy once !) is forced at length to bend ;
 Nor from th' impending ruin can be sav'd
 The weakly scion at his side.

III.

What is ambition, what is fame ?
 When Nature speaks, who shall not hear ?
 Who shall reject a dying Father's claim ?
 When he with terror shakes, feel'st thou, oh son, no fear ?

IV.

In thunder from the vacant throne
 I hear a warning voice declare
 " Of grandeur and of vanity beware !
 " Contemplate death and profit by the sight !
 " Cut off in all his might,
 " His ill's are now thy own ;
 " Thy Sire to toil and death hath left thee heir :
 " Of Policy's infectious paths, once more, beware ! "

V. Oh,

V.

Oh, might it be !
Thrice blest Obscurity, that I might dwell with thee,
With eager step and jocund heart,
Rejecting pomp, despising crowns,
And that vile falsehood which the throne surrounds,
To former solitude well pleas'd would I depart.

These verses will inform you that when the heart is full the lips are prolific. I am certain you pity me in my present predicament, and that you are really interested. Let me intreat you to send me your Devotee, your Mahomet, and, in general, whatever you imagine may divert me. Assure the marchionels of my esteem, and be persuaded that, let fate place me in what situation it will, you will never perceive any change in me, except that something of the efficacious may be add'd to that esteem and friendship which I have, and ever shall have, for you.

P. S. I often think of that passage in the Henriade which speaks of the courtiers of Valois.

*Ses courtisans en pleurs, autour de lui rangés **.

I shall send the Henriade into England to have it printed : every preparatory step has been taken for that purpose.

* His courtiers all in tears around him rang'd.

LETTER CXVI.

From M. de Voltaire,

Brussels, March 10, 1740.

"TIS strange! Why wish to shun that glorious throng
The general voice accords to you alone?
A suffering Father's pangs you weeping view,
And Europe gives such filial love its due:
Th' applauding world shall future temples build,
To him who every duty has fulfill'd!
Oh! Could your royal Sire but truly read
Those eyes that weep, the heart that thus can bleed,
How would he praise, with grateful tears, the Power
That gave him such a Son, at such an hour!
Nor would his breast by deep regret be torn;
Pleas'd would he die, remembering you were born!
Remembering what a blessing he should leave
His people, and the world, no more he'd grieve;
Except to think——Rash Muse, thy babbling cease!
Admire the Son, but leave the Sire to sleep in peace.

I did not expect your letter, sir, dated Feb. 26th, and which I received on the 9th of March. This will depart on Monday, the 14th, because that will be post-day for Amsterdam.

I know not what your present situation is, but I never have loved, never have admired you so much. If you are a king, you will soon render

many

many men happy; should you remain prince royal, you will be their instructor. Could I estimate myself at any thing, I should, for my own interest, wish you to remain in your happy leisure, and that you might continue to amuse yourself in writing those charming things which give me information and delight. Being a king, you will only be occupied by the means of rendering your provinces flourishing, in entering into sage and profitable alliances, in establishing manufactures, and in meriting immortality. I shall hear only of your labours and your fame; but probably shall no longer receive those agreeable verses, nor that nervous and sublime prose, which, if so you pleased, would acquire you another kind of immortality. The day of a king consists but of four and twenty hours, and these I see all employed in the happiness of mankind; but cannot see a minute to spare for that literary intercourse with which your royal highness has been pleased to honour me. No matter, I wish to behold you on the throne; for I have the honesty to prefer the felicity of some millions to my own private satisfaction.

I continue to wait your commands relative to Machiavel. I imagine you will order me to print the translation of La Houssaye, by the side of your refutation. The more powerfully you

will refute Machiavel, by your conduct, the higher are my hopes that you will permit the antidote, which you yourself have prepared, to be printed.

I have done myself the honour to send your royal highness Mahomet. The Devotee is transcribing; should she arrive in time to amuse your royal highness, she will be very fortunate; if not, she must wait a leisure moment to be honoured with your notice.

I have a singular favour to request of your royal highness, and this frankly is that you would not praise me quite so much, in the preface which you have deigned to write to the Henriade. You will think me exceedingly insolent, in wishing to prescribe bounds to your goodness; and it will seem pleasant for Voltaire to request not to be praised by his prince. However, I wish to be praised, I have that vanity to excess; but I earnestly request you would permit me to retrench some things to which I feel I have little claim. I resemble a courtier, whose desires are moderate (if you know any such) who should say to you—Bestow a little grandeur on me, but do not bestow too much, lest you should turn my brain.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank your royal highness, for having changed your idea of

an engraved edition to that of a beautiful impression in the usual way. It will be better, and I shall sooner enjoy the inestimable honour you have deigned to confer. I cannot promise myself length of life sufficient for such an undertaking as the engraving of the Henriade. I will soon employ the remaining time which nature shall grant to finish the age of Louis XIV.

Madame du Chatelet had written to your royal highness before I received your letter of the 26th. She is become intirely the disciple of Leibnitz. I, for my part, draw up the briefs in behalf both of Newton and Leibnitz, and deduce a state of the case which, if I do not mistake, may be read without contention:

I ask a thousand pardons, great prince, for prattling thus, at a moment when you must be so entirely occupied; but, king, or prince, you will ever be my sovereign; though you have a very talkative subject.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R

LETTER CXVII.

From the Prince Royal.

DEAR VOLTAIRE, Berlin, March 18th, 1740*.

YOU have very much obliged me by your sincerity, and by the remarks that you have aided me to make on the refutation of Machiavel. You must naturally expect to receive at least some of the chapters corrected; and such indeed was my intention. But this is a very fearful crisis to me, and I must rather think of refuting Machiavel by my conduct than by my writings. I promise, however, that I will correct the whole as soon as I have a few moments to myself. I have scarcely had time to run over the fanatical prophet of Asia; I will not speak my opinion, for you know we cannot judge of works of genius till they have first been read with cool reflection.

I send you some few trifles in verse, to shew you that I fill up the little void that is left in my present hours in recreations with Calliope.

I am exceedingly well satisfied at the resolution you have taken to finish the age of Louis XIV. it is a work that ought to be finished, for

* May 18th, in the Berlin edition.

the honour of our age, and to render its triumph over all that antiquity has produced complete.

It is said that your eternal cardinal is to be pope ; if so he may have his apotheosis painted in the dome of St. Peter's at Rome. I doubt the truth of the fact, and imagine that the helm of the French government is more than equal to the half rusty keys of St. Peter. Machiavel might dispute pre eminence with St. Paul, and De Fleuri might find it more conducive to his glory to dupe the councils of princes, composed of men of understanding, than to cheat the superstitious and orthodox multitude of the catholic church.

You will give me great pleasure by sending me your Devotee, and your metaphysics. Perhaps I shall have nothing to return ; but I will trust to your generosity, and hope you will kindly give me credit for some weeks; after which Machiavel, and perhaps something else equally insignificant, may pay off my score.

Inclosed is a letter from Cesario, whose health daily strengthens. We are continually speaking of our friends at Cirey ; I see them in fancy, but I never see them thus without wishing a dream so agreeable might be realised, which, illusive as it is, is a substitute for pleasure.

Adieu, dear Voltaire ; lay in an ample provision

vision of health and strength. Husband your health, especially; be as careful of it as I am prodigal of the sentiments of esteem and friendship in which you will find me ever constant.

I am your very faithful friend, &c.

L E T T E R CXVIII.

From the Prince Royal.

Berlin, March 23d, 1740.

FEAR not that empire e'er, or Gods, or Fate,
Th' ecstatic lyre shall cause me t'abdicat :
Fear not I should prefer, with wavering heart,
Int'rest and pride to science and to art :
As coldly I can dazzling grandeur trace
As Priam's council look'd on Helen's face.
Pomp, with her gaudy trappings, cannot hide
Those rigorous laws which I must make my guide.
Science my mistress is, the throne's my wife ;
The lover would not be a slave for life,
Did not resistless Fate, with malice franglit,
Impose the shackle which herself had wrought.
The world my will, in justice, can't condemn ;
I swim but with the stream I cannot stem.

No barometric change my friendship knows,
Now high, now low, with every wind that blows ;
The phantom of a title, or a name,
Can none but weak or vulgar minds inflame ;

From

From heaven immortal genius would look down,
And in Voltaire a kindred spirit own !
Well then may kings, forgetting silly pride,
Poor royalty and dulness thrown aside,
Quitting th' infidious paths where falsehood lurks,
Walpole and Fleur, with their subtle quirks,
The fool infatiate and the fawning throng,
Listen to thee, enraptur'd at the song !
And, as thy fingers strike the wondrous lyre,
Feel heav'nly joys revive, and catch poetic fire !

Such are my intentions. Be my destiny what it may, you will see me divide my time between my duty, my friend, and the arts. Habit has made the aptitude which I had for them constitutional. When I can neither read nor write, I am as restless as your great snuff-takers, who continually put their hand to their pocket, when they are deprived of their box. The ornaments of the edifice are changed, without making any alteration, either in the foundation or the walls. This you may happen to see in me, for the state of my father is such that there are no remaining hopes of his cure; I must therefore prepare to act my part.

A private life would better suit my freedom than that to which I must submit. You know I love independence, to renounce which, and to subject one's self to the painful offices of duty, you likewise know is a severe task. My only

conso-

consolation is the thought of serving my fellow citizens, and being useful to my country. May I hope to see you, or will you cruelly deprive me of that satisfaction? This is an idea of consolation which dwells on my mind, like the coming of the Messiah on the minds of the Jews.

I will make farther corrections in the preface of the Henriade; but you will not take it ill that I should leave truths there which only resemble flattery because they are often repeated in a silly and unseasonable manner. I am altering some of the chapters of Machiavel; but in my present predicament I proceed but slowly.

Fanatic though he be, I admire Mahomet; he must do you much honour. The conduct of the piece is excellently conceived; there is nothing to shock probability or rule; the characters are perfectly well sustained. The end of the third and the whole fourth act have moved me even to tears. As a philosopher you convince the mind, and as a poet you affect the heart; and I almost prefer the latter gift to the former, since men are all born with sensibility, but very few with reason.

An ink-stand comes, but if it came
To increase my pleasure and my fame,
When this you sent, 'twere surely fit
You should have likewise sent your wit.

For

For this I thank you, as I also do the marchioness, to whom I beg you will present the inclosed box, made at Berlin, from a stone which was found at Remusberg. As I fear, my dear friend, lest your remembrance of me should not be so fresh as it was at Cirey, I send you my portrait, which I hope will never quit your finger.

Should a change happen, you shall be the first to be informed of it. Pity me, for I assure you I am much to be pitied. Continue to love me, for I am better pleased with your friendship than your respect. Be persuaded your merit is too well known to me for me not to afford you, on all occasions, marks of the perfect esteem with which I am, &c.

L E T T E R CXIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

Brussels, April 6th, 1740.

I HAVE received a packet of the 18th of March, with which your royal highness has honoured me. You were certainly formed to act in a singularly excellent manner; as a proof of which

which you have been able, in the present crisis of your fate, to do things which require the utmost presence of mind. All you have said on patience appertains to the great hero, and the great genius; it is one of the best things you have deigned to send me. While thanking you, sir, for the good lessons which you there have given me—

Though spleen my patience may abuse,
 Patience no doubt I ought to use.
 He who your bigot contradicts
 Sure penance on himself inflicts.
 Zealots, who most forgiveness preach,
 And charity pretend to teach,
 Their wrath on all occasions wreak,
 And, like their god, for vengeance seek.

The translation of the ode *Reñius vives Licini* shows that Mæcenas and Horace are sometimes united. You did not intend to give the literal sense of

*Auream quisquis mediocritatem
 Diligit tutus caret obsoleti
 Sordibus teñi, caret invindet
 Sobrius aula.*

You so well feel what is proper to our language, and what the beauties of the Latin are, that you have not translated *obsoleti teñi*, which would be exceedingly mean in French.

Lola

*Loin de la grandeur fastueuse,
La frugale simplicité
N'en est que plus délicieuse*.*

These expressions are much more dignified in French than in the Latin ; they are not so descriptive, but the great misfortune of our language is, that it is not sufficiently circumstantial. I must observe that *mediocrité* is with us a word of five syllables ; if it be your absolute determination to make it only three or four, why you are a prince, and must do as you please.

The conclusion of the Epistle to M. Jordan is a pledge to render mankind happy. You had no need to make the promise ; I will depend upon your character, without asking your word.

I here add some pieces, half verse, half prose, that I may pay tribute to him by whom I am continually enriched. The Epistle to M. de Maurepas, one of our secretaries of state, is as applicable to your royal highness as to him : for, if I do not mistake, it is your inclination to afford equal protection to all the arts ; and I am very certain that, if any one had written the edifying book of *Marie à la coque*, you would not have rewarded him with the archbishopric

* Removed from the pomp of grandeur, frugal simplicity is but the more delicious.

of Sens, and with an annual income of a hundred thousand livres, while men of real talents were suffered to remain in want.

I know not whether your royal highness has received a certain inkstand, sent by the post to Wesel, sealed with the arms of the princess de la Tour, and addressed to general Bork, or to the governor of Wesel, that it might be diligently expedited. Your royal highness has sent me something to drink, and I have taken the liberty to send you something to write with.

When wine is giv'n by royal charter,
An inkhorn to return in barter,
Is no great truck, I trow :
But, should this horn prolific teem
With works divine, mankind will deem
Their thanks to me they owe.

I hope your royal highness will pardon these excessive freedoms. I wait your final commands concerning the refutation of the preceptor of statesmen. There is little to alter, and I still continue to think it will be an advantage to the human race to make this antidote public.

I am transcribing my little Abstract of the Metaphysics of Newton and Leibnitz. It will make a large packet. Must I send it by the way of Wesel? I wait your orders, to which I shall always conform; for you know that Mi-
nerva,

nerva, Apollo, and Virtue, have made me your subject.

Madame du Chatelet will have the honour to send your royal highness something, which will be some recompence for my tediousness.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R CXX.

From the Prince Royal.

DEAR VOLTAIRE,

Berlin, April 15, 1740*.

YOUR Devotee† is arrived at the most fortunate moment possible; she is a charming creature!—The characters are well supported, the plot is well conducted, and the denouement natural. Cæsario and I have read it with great pleasure, earnestly wishing to see it represented here, before its author, before the friend whom we so much desire to meet. My half-sick, half-well friend compliments you for having, ill as you are, worked harder, and to better purpose, than so many other authors who are in full health. I cannot account for a being so peculiar. Among

* Undated in the Berlin edition.

† *La Prude, ou la Garderie de Caffette.* The Prude, or the Keeper of the Casket, a comedy by Voltaire. T.

us common mortals, the mind always suffers with the body. The least thing renders me incapable of thought; but your soul, superior to the organs of sense, triumphs over them all. Oh! that it might triumph over death himself!

Be kind enough to read a short Tale, ill enough written, which I here send you; and an Epistle, in which I have thought proper to address a sort of people who are seldom inclined to regulate their conduct by the morality of poets. Machiavel must follow when he can. You must have the patience to wait till I can apply myself to the work.

The people here are so deceitful, so restless, so turbulent, that it is hardly possible to escape the epidemic disease. All I am able to do is to string a few follies in rhyme. I wait till I shall find myself in a more tranquil state, that I may recur to occupations more serious, and which require reflection. We have at present a wretched round of feasting; and feast we must, be the consequence what it may. We listen to a succession of inconsistent harangues, which it is necessary to applaud with an air of conviction. I submit to this much against my will, for I hate every thing which approaches hypocrisy and falsehood.

Algarotti writes me word that Pine has not yet finished his edition of Virgil, and that the

Henriade

Heniade must be laid on the shelf in the mean time. I have not failed to grumble, for it seems to me that—

Since Miso, with becoming grace,
As soon as you appear'd, gave place,
'Tis odd that master Pine shoud chuse
His paltry honours to refuse !

You see, dear Voltaire, the difference there is between the decrees of Apollo and the whims of a printer. I do but aid the glory of this deity by accelerating the publication of your work; and I hope soon to subdue the frenzy of the Englishman, by gratifying his interested avidity.

Be kind enough to affuse the marchioness of my attentions. Take care of the health of the man whom I love; and never forget that, ap-pertaining as you do to me, you ought to pay every respect to the preservation of the greatest good the gods ever conferred on me. Let me soon hear news of your convalescence; and be certain that, of all the news I ever shall receive during life, this will be the most agreeable.

Adieu, wholly yours.

Inclosed is a small packet from Cæfario; I hope you will not remember him with indifference, but that you will hear with pleasure of the daily recovery of his health.

LETTER CXXI.

From the Prince Royal.

DEAR VOLTAIRE,

Berlin, April 26, 1740.

THE galleons of Brufels are arrived, and have brought me inestimable treasures. I am astonished at the prodigious fecundity of your Peru. Your means seem inexhaustible. You soften the bitterest moments of my life. Why cannot I equally contribute to your happiness? In my present state of inquietude I have neither time nor sufficient tranquillity of mind to correct Machiavel. I abandon my work to you, persuaded it will be embellished by your hands. It must pass through your crucible, that the gold and the dross may be separated.

I send you an Epistle on the Necessity of cultivating the Arts; of this necessity you are well persuaded, but there are some who think differently.

Adieu, dear Voltaire; I wait for your letters with impatience. What relates to your health interests me as much as the products of your genius. Assure the marchioness of my esteem, and rest persuaded I cannot be more perfectly than I am,

Your very faithful friend.

L E T.

L E T T E R CXXII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

April, 1740.

YOUR image haunts me day and night.
I dream of my prince, as a lover dreams of his
mistress.

*Tempus erat quo prima quies mortalibus agris
Incipit, et dono divum gratissima serpit :
In somnis exco ante oculos pulcherrimus heros
Vifus adegit mibi. . . .*

I have beheld you ascending a throne of solid
silver, which had not been raised by yourself,
and on which you sat rather in grief than
gladness—

More sorrowful, a dying father to behold,
Than cheer'd by courtier's smiles, or globes of glitt'ring
gold.

I saw crowds of courtiers, who had neglected
to visit his royal highness at Remusberg, assem-
ble to salute his majesty at Berlin—

Their lace, their gilding, and their fringe I spied,
Their native insignificance to hide.
Nor can I doubt their high and ancient race;
Janus was their progenitor, with double face.

G 4

They

They might be descendants on the mother's side from the prophet Elisha, who, according to the most holy Scripture, had a double spirit; which inheritance has descended to many a priest, as well as to courtiers—

Surrounded by a motly crew,
With sage benevolence, I view
My generous prince with smiles accost
Of former foes a fawning host.
They duty plead, the plea is good,
Nor can by Frederic be withstood;
But, while he clemency to these extends,
He shew'st his favours on his well-tried friends.

Antoninus, Titus, Trajan, and Julian descended from heaven to behold the triumph—

These ancient heroes look with much disdain
Tow'rd Rome, and think they surely have mista'en
Th' abode of conquest, honour, arts, and arms;
They own Berlin can boast superior charms.

They might, if they pleased, be present at the election of a pope; but Titus and Marcus Aurelius are unacquainted with cardinals, and the Holy Ghost. Truth, which these heroes love, is not of the conclave; for I saw Truth standing beside the throne of silver—

Frankly the hero plac'd her by his side;
She wonder'd at herself, and godlike guide;
Wonder'd, and blush'd with half embarrass'd air,
That Truth in freedom should be seated there!

She

She knew well that the throne was as little her place as the conclave, and that so much honour did not belong to a poor exile; but Frederic encouraged her, and spoke to her as to a person with whom he was well acquainted—

The Florentine, old Machiavel,
Saw this, and sought his native hell;
And as he fled, with shame increas'd,
A cardinal, a statesman, priest,
And Jesuit, fled with equal pain;
Hateful of heav'n-born truth, and Frederic's reign,

Frederic however recalled Machiavel, nor would suffer him to depart, after having made his appearance, without first making honourable amends to the human race, in the person of its protector. He ordered him to kneel—

And now, confused, the Florentine
Avow'd that Virtue is divine;
Reluctant own'd that honesty
Is still the best of policy.

The Virtues then all began to care for the conqueror of Machiavel—

Sage Liberality was there,
Gen'rous and just in act and air;
Mad Prodigality she check'd,
And treated Avarice with neglect.
Duty and Labour too were seen,
With sovereign and determin'd mien.

The

The Loves, and all their sportive train,
Were in their turn allow'd to reign.
Courteous to all, on all he smil'd :
Stern Labour wore an aspect mild ;
While frolic Love his tricks was bade t' abate,
And by Decorum taught to captivate.

Mars and Policy however pointed to a map
of Juliers and Berg, and the hero drew his sword ;
yet was ready to return it to the scabbard, for the
good of his subjects, and the happiness of the
world. The fine arts came from all countries
to pay homage to their protector. Music, Paint-
ing, Eloquence, History, Philosophy, laboured
under his inspection ; he presided over all, and
seemed born for these arts as much as to govern
and to please. A theatre rose ; an academy was
formed, not like that of the forty French Cy-
phers—

Ridiculously learned, hear them preach
On airy emptiness ; or gravely teach
How words to weigh, on periods to dispute,
And guilty commas catch and execute,

This academy, founded by my sovereign, re-
sembled that of the Sciences, and of the Royal
Society at London. In fine, whatever was good,
beautiful, true, just, and amiable, had assembled
round this throne. I have not forgotten my
dream, like the madman of the scripture, who
threatened

threatened to put all his state-counsellors to death, if they did not divine the vision that had escaped his memory ; I remember it perfectly, and want neither a Daniel nor a Joseph for an interpreter.

Nor were all these the phantoms of a dream :
With other kings indeed such things but seem ;
Potent, compassionate, as good as wise,
My prince my golden dreams will realize.

In my last letter I reproached my sovereign for having reduced *mediocrité* to a word of four syllables ; the fault was enormous, and one of the greatest he will ever commit,

L E T T E R CXXIII.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR VOLTAIRE, Remusberg, May 3, 1742.

IT must be owned that your dreams are equal to the waking thoughts of many men of wit ; not because I am the theme of your verse, but because it is scarcely possible to say more elegant or more agreeable things on so trifling a subject.

The God of Taste, to whose divine abode
Thou hast so charmingly describ'd the road,
First wrote the verses ; then, to give them fame,
Before he sent, he sign'd them with thy name.

This

This I cannot but believe : you have mutually been guilty of artifice—

Divine Voltaire his thoughts communicates ;
The God of Taste but writes what he dictates.

Inform us therefore whether this be truth ; and how your singular invention could combine so much imagination with so much justness, such depth of thought, and such sportive levity.

Grace, learning, genius, wisdom, wit,
Do, each and all, their pow'rs transmit :
To charm Emilia, thou art fraught
With all the laughing loves have taught :
And sage Urania grants that thine
Shall be her compas, rule, and line.

I imagine this will be a riddle to future times, and the touchstone of those who hereafter shall wish to be learned and amiable. Your dream, my dear Voltaire, though exceedingly advantageous to me, seems to contain the real characteristic of dreams, which never perfectly resemble truth. But not to mention that many things are necessary to accomplish this dream, if I am not mistaken, the prophetic spirit should have added—

Berlin, thy Genius lately wing'd her way,
O'er many a wealthy land obliged to stray,
A sage to seek whose ample mind,
Expansive and refin'd,

The

The fine arts might again restore,
To Wisdom give her ancient lore,
And all their wants and all their wishes grant :
To ~~thee~~ this wond'rous prize,
Around she cast her eager eyes—
Not on the dotard, proud in purple robe,
By starving wretch or abject author prais'd,
Who ruling France, rules half the globe—
To thee, Voltaire, the turn'd, on thee she gaz'd ;
Saw Pallas, thoe, and Truth, with beam severe,
Strange to relate ! weigh this our pond'rous sphere !
“ Certes, the throne
“ Of Prussia were thy own,
“ If now,” she cried, “ as heretofore,
“ Men chose their monarchs from among the wise.
“ Enough ! the sage is found ! the search is o'er !
“ Though laws absurd, to knave, or fool,
“ Or tyrant, grant the sceptre and the rule,
“ Let knave, or fool, or tyrant, lord it o'er their kind,
“ Voltaire shall reign the monarch of the mind.”

The Genius of Prussia will not stop here; but will wish, be the price what it may, to place you at the head of the new academy mentioned in the dream. I tell the Genius that we are not yet so near the attainment of this blessing as we believe—

Beauty and Emily more potent far
Than bays and academic honours are.

The Genius disputes the point; and pretends to prove that the pleasure of knowing is preferable to that of enjoying.

But enough! 'Tis the dictum of prudent Boileau,
That the art to be dull is to say all we know.

From the fortunate Genius of Prussia I pass to
the guardian-angel of Remusberg, the protection
of whom was manifest in the dreadful fire by
which a great part of the town was reduced to
ashes. The palace was with difficulty preserved ;
but there is no miracle in its preservation, for
you no doubt know that your portrait is kept
there—

Thou, blest Palladium, only could'nt protect
Its ancient turrets, or repel the flames
That soon in undulating volumes rose,
And half the town in smoky ruins laid.
But thou wert there, great image, and didst awe,
And drive far off, the raging fiends of fire !
By flames assai'd, old Troy forgot to guard
The heav'ly effigy her walls inclo'd ;
But soon she wept her folly, when she saw
The Grecian fire those haughty walls consume.

This Palladiurti is placed in the sanctuary of
the palace; that is to say, in the library, where
the arts and sciences, assembled, may be said to
serve as its frame—

The wit, the scholar, and the sage,
Of every country, every age,
Collected here, their homage pay,
Their gifts upon your altars lay;

Your

Your various works they bow before ;
Prostrate, your Henriade adore ;
They listen, wonder, and revere,
As courtiers eager, and as saints sincere.

Good Mary of Loretto, say,
Though fanners faint, and bigots pray ;
Though priests in pompous robes await,
To shew thy jewels, robes, and plate ;
While Ign'rance lifts its sheepish eyes,
And Craft purloins some new-made prize ;
Can praise, so caught, such bliss impart,
As praise which flows from feeling heart ;
Spontaneous, nay unceasing, flows,
Nor av'rice, guile, nor priestcraft knows ?

I entreat you to criticise both my verse and prose; for, in proportion as the oracles arrive, I correct. And, that I may furnish you new materials for castigation, I send you a Tale, with the subject of which I was furnished during my stay at Berlin. The chief incidents are true; the fact is this :

A person named Kirch, an astronomer by profession, and as I believe something of an astrologer from inclination, died of an apoplexy. A minister of the reformed church, one of his friends, came to visit his sisters, who were both astronomers, and advised them not to inter their brother, because there had been many examples of persons who had been buried before they were

really dead. The credulous sisters, in consequence of this advice, kept the corpse three weeks before they put it in the grave ; which they were forced to do, by the disagreeable odour it emitted, in opposition to the remonstrances of the minister, who was in daily expectation of the resurrection of M. Kirch. I thought the story so singular that it deserved to be put into rhyme, as a Tale. My only object was to amuse myself; and, if it be too long, you must attribute the error to my intemperance for rhyming.

Suffer not my ring, dear Voltaire, ever to quit your finger. It is a talisman, composed of wishes for your welfare, and cannot but bring you good fortune. To this I myself shall take every means of contributing, assuring you that I am, invariably,

Your most faithful friend,

FREDERIC.

Be kind enough to give my compliments to the lovely marchioness.

L E T-

L E T T E R CXXIV.

*From the Prince Royal *.*

Remusberg, May 18; 1748.

STERN proof, demanding faith, besets me here ;
 There eloquence delights my ravish'd ear ;
 Affail'd on this side, charm'd on that, I find
 Th' ambiguous tyrant, Doubt, enslaves my mind :
 Man, born to act, to act is surely free ;
 But reason and his passions disagree.
 Nor can his cumbrous organs wisdom teach ;
 That thing call'd ATOM is beyond his reach :
 Bodies too vast are equally unknown ;
 Not all his *lens* can render them his own ;
 His scieatific arts and wiles are vain ;
 And, pleas'd or angry, blind he must remain.

This is all the judgment I can give, between the marchioness and M. de Voltaire. When I read your Metaphysics, I exclaim, admire, and believe : when I peruse the Physical Institutions of the marchioness, I begin to waver, and know not whether I am deceived, or deceive myself. In a word, a man must possess an intelligence as superior to yours, as that which you possess is

* The beginning of this letter relates to a Treatise on Metaphysics, in which M. de Voltaire had discussed some principles of Leibnitz, maintained by madame du Chatelet, in her *Institutions Physiques*.

superior to other thinking beings, to decide which of you is right.

I humbly own that I greatly respect the adequate cause; but that I believe its use would be infinitely more certain, if our knowledge were as extensive as this adequate cause requires it to be. We have only a few ideas of the attributes of matter, and the laws of mechanics; but I doubt not that the eternal Architect has an infinite number of secrets, which we shall never discover, and which consequently will render the application of the adequate cause inadequate, when employed by us.

On the other hand, I own that those supposed simple beings, who think, appear to me exceedingly metaphysical; and that I do not comprehend the vacuum of Newton, and but little of the space of Leibnitz. It appears to me impossible for men to reason on the attributes and acts of the Creator, without being absurd. I have no idea of God except that he is a being infinitely good.

I know not whether his freedom and the adequate cause be contradictory, or whether laws co-eternal with his existence have rendered his actions necessarily subject to their determination; but I am very well convinced that every thing is tolerably as it should be, in this world;

and

and that, if God had meant to make us metaphysicians, he would assuredly have communicated information, and intelligence, infinitely superior to what we possess.

It is to be lamented that philosophers are required to give a reason for every thing ; for, when they have no palpable reason to give, they must imagine one. Notwithstanding all this, it is my duty to tell you, that I am exceedingly well satisfied with your Treatise on Metaphysics. It is the Pitt, or the great Sancy *, which in a small compass includes immense wealth. The solidity of your arguments, and the moderation of your decisions, should serve as examples to all philosophers, and those who interfere in the discussion of truth. The desire of information appears to be their natural end, but the pleasure of contention is too often the result.

I wish I were in the peaceful and tranquil state in which you suppose me. I assure you, philosophy appears to me more charming, and more attractive, than the throne. Its pleasures are durable ; it is superior to the chimeras and errors of man ; and those who can follow it into the countries of virtue and truth, are very blamable to forsake it for that of vice and illusion.

* Two well-known diamonds.

Escap'd from Circe's palace, and the cries
Of crowds, who fly the virtuous and the wife,
From dangers free, in study's calm retreat
I thought myself, and thought my bliss complete ;
But low'ring storms and new-born cares obtrude,
And threat to wreft me from my solitude.

Thus are appearances, in this world, very deceitful. To tell you the honest truth, I must inform you that the language of the gazettes is more than ever false, and that the love of life and hope are inseparable from human nature. These are the foundation of that pretended state of convalescence, the reality of which I wish I could see. The king's malady, my dear Voltaire, is a complication of diseases, the progress of which deprives us of all hope of cure, and partakes both of dropsy and atrophy. The most alarming symptoms are frequent vomitings, which greatly enfeeble the patient. He hopes and believes he shall save himself, by the efforts he makes to appear in public; and this it is which deceives those who are not well-informed of the true state of things.

What most we wish we ne'er enjoy :
A mistress charms the am'rous boy ;
A kingdom is ambition's claim ;
The poet hunts an empty name ;
A title courtiers keep in view,
And ribbands covet, red and blue ;

The

The sage delights in truth, and ease :
 But wishing is the mind's disease ;
 And man, in every rank and state,
 Must first resolve to meet his fate,
 And act his ill-allotted part,
 Ere he can know content of heart.

Then, be my brows with laurel bound,
 Or with more splendid bauble crown'd,
 Me shall you view with equal pace
 Continue my predestin'd race ;
 Nor seek without those joys to win
 Which only can be found within.

This is the only thing I have to resolve on ;
 for I perceive, with too much certainty, retreat
 is not in my power. I shall quit my indepen-
 dence with regret ; and while, on the great
 theatre of the world, I ascend the throne, shall
 lament the loss of my once happy obscurity.

Had I that freedom of mind which you sup-
 pose in man, I should send you something better
 than bad verses : but learn that these are not the
 last, and that you are menaced with a new epis-
 tle.—Another epistle !—Yes, my dear Voltaire ;
 another epistle : it must be so.

Now we are speaking of poetry, let me tell
 you I have seen the tragedy of Gresset, intitled
 Edward. The versification appears good, but
 I think the characters ill depicted. The pas-
 sions must be studied, in order to put them in

action; the human heart must be known, that, by imitating its secret springs, the theatrical automaton may resemble and act conformably to nature. Greffet does not appear to me to have drunken at the right stream. Individual beauties may render his tragedy supportable to the reader, but will not be sufficient to give it vigour in representation.

*Autre est la voix d'un perroquet,
Autre est celle de Melpomene *.*

He who wrote this satirical remark has perceived the real defects of Greffet. There is something indescribable, something of the effeminate and the languid, in the part of Edward, which cannot fail to inspire the auditor with dulness.

Weary of the tediousness of Mr. Pine, I have determined to have the Henriade printed under my own inspection, and have sent expressly for some of the most elegant silver type that can be procured in England. Our artists are all at work on the plates and the vignettes. Cost what it will, we are determined to produce a masterpiece, worthy of the subject—

* “The voice of a parrot is very different from that of Melpomene.” This refers to the well-known tale of Greffet, intitled *Ver-Vert*. T.

With trumpet arm'd, I'll act the part of fame;
And to the listening world your worth proclaim.

I imagine you will think me, at present, if not the most impertinent, at least the most prattling of princes. But prolixity is one of the defects of my nation, and errors are but slowly eradicated. I ask pardon, my dear Voltaire, on behalf of myself and my countrymen. I am however one of the most excusable of them; for I find so much pleasure in conversing with you, that hours appear to me no more than moments. If you wish my letters to be more short, do you be less amiable: but this, according to the twelfth paragraph of Leibnitz, implies a contradiction; consequently, &c.

Continue to love me a little, for I am jealous of your esteem; and rest persuaded that you cannot do less, without much ingratitude toward him who is with admiration, &c.

L E T T E R CXXV.

From the King.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Charlottenburg, June 6, 1740.

THE die is cast—I am not what I was—I have been present at the last moments of the
H 4 king,

king, his agony, and death. I certainly had no need, while stepping toward royalty, of such a lesson, in order to inspire me with disgust for the vanity of human grandeur.

I had planned a small work on metaphysics, which is thus metamorphosed to politics. I imagined myself at a tournament with the amiable Voltaire, and am obliged to enter the lists with the old mitred Machiavel *. In fine, my dear Voltaire, we are not masters of our own destiny; the whirlwind of incident hurries us away, and we are driven perforce. Let me entreat you to regard me only as a zealous citizen, a philosopher; somewhat sceptical, but a truly faithful friend. For the love of God write to me as a man, and despise titles, name, and exterior splendour.

I have hitherto scarcely had time to recollect myself. I have infinite employment, and am giving myself more; but, notwithstanding all my labours, I have still time enough to admire your works, and to find in them information and amusement.

Affuse the marchioness of my esteem; tell her I admire her, as much as her vast knowledge, and uncommon abilities, deserve to be admired.

* The cardinal de Fleury.

Farewel,

Farewel, my dear Voltaire. If I live I will see you this very year. Love me always, and continue always to deal sincerely with your friend,

L E T T E R CXXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R E,

June 18, 1740.

ALTHOUGH your destiny be changed, the beauties of your mind are the same. My mind however is altered : I was inclined to misanthropy, and was too much afflicted at remarking the injustice of men. At present I give myself up to joy, in company with the whole world. Thanks to Heaven, your majesty has already fulfilled all my predictions : you are already beloved, in Prussia, and in Europe. The emperor's resident, during the last war, said to the cardinal de Fleury—"The French, sir, are very amiable, but they are all Turks."—Your majesty's envoy may at present say—The French are all Prussians.

The marquis d'Argenson, counsellor of state to the king of France, the friend of M. de Voltaire, and a man of true merit, with whom I have often conversed concerning your majesty at Paris, wrote

wrote to me on the 13th, and informed me that M. de Valori expresses himself in these very words—“ He begins his reign in a manner “ which, according to all appearance, will be “ continued; by unceasing proofs of the good- “ ness of his heart, by justice to the memory of “ the deceased, and by affection for his subjects.” —I cite this passage, to your majesty, for no other reason but because I am certain it was written in the flow of feeling, and communicated to me in the same spirit. I am unacquainted with M. de Valori, and your majesty knows I ought not to depend on being in his good graces; but, as he thinks like me, and is so just toward your majesty, I am glad to be just in return.

The minister who governs the country in which I am, said to me—“ We shall see whe-
“ ther he will immediately disband those useles-
“ giants, that have occasioned so many com-
“ plaints.” —And I replied—“ He will do no-
“ thing rashly. He will not discover any marked
“ intention of condemning the errors of which
“ his predecessor may have been guilty; but
“ will be satisfied with correcting them, when
“ opportunity shall offer.” Deign to own, great
king, that I have well divined.

Your majesty commands me, while writing to you, to think less of the king than of the man.

This is a command according to my own heart. I know not how to behave in the company of a king, but I am wholly at my ease in that of a man; especially of a man whose head and heart are full of the love of the human race.

There is a question which I should never dare to put to the king, but which I will venture to ask of the man; and that is, Whether the late king became convinced of, and loved, all the merit of my adorable prince, before his death? I know that the qualities of the late king were so different from those you possess, that it very well might happen he might not have felt all your various merits; but, if he were moved, if he acted with confidence, if he justified the admirable sentiments which you have deigned to testify to me toward him, in your letters, I shall in part be satisfied. A word from your adorable hand will inform me of all this.

The king will perhaps ask why I have put these questions to *the man*, and will tell me I am very curious, and very daring. Do you know the answer I shall make to his majesty? I shall say to him—"Sire, it is because I love *the man* with "my whole heart."

The king, or the man, has done me the honour to inform me that he is, at present, obliged
to

to prefer politics to metaphysics, and that he has entered the lists with our good cardinal—

That heav'n devoted saint, who quits
His petty mitre for a crown,
With meek and contrite heart submits
To rule, yet not acquire renown ;
With zeal right catholic, I ween,
His craft political to vent ;
And all his apostolic spleen
On you, vile heretic, is bent.

It is questioned here whether your majesty will, or will not, undergo the ceremonies of a coronation. I see no need you have of a few drops of oil, to make yourself respectable, and dear to your people. I hold holy vials in great veneration, especially when brought from heaven for people like Clovis ; and I have no quarrel with Samuel for having poured oil of olives upon the head of Saul, because olive trees were very common in the country.

Though you, by form, were not appointed
What scripture calls the Lord's anointed,
My hero and my king are you ;
My heart, to virtue ever true,
Though priests their holy oil should save,
Admires the worthy, wise, and brave.

Since your majesty has condescended to con-
tinue

tinue a man, and since you still think fit to honour me with your letters, I will venture to enquire how you divide your day. I am afraid lest your labours should be too great. People sometimes sup without any interval between their attention to business and their meal. They consequently rise the next day with difficulty of digestion ; labour with a mind less clear ; force nature ; and fall ill. In the name of the human race, for whose welfare you are necessary, be careful of health so precious.

I have another favour to ask of your majesty ; and that is, when you shall have formed some new establishment, and have occasioned any one of the fine arts to flourish, that you will deign to let me know it ; for this will be to let me know the new obligations I am under to you.

There was a phrase in your majesty's letter which transported me ; it gave me to hope a beatific vision this year. I am not the only person who sighs for this happiness. The queen of Sheba wishes to take measures to behold Solomon in all his glory. I have communicated a little project of this kind to the baron von Kayserling ; but I am much afraid lest it should fail.

In six or seven weeks, if the Dutch booksellers do not deceive me, I hope to send your majesty

majesty the best and most useful book that ever was written; a book worthy of yourself, and your reign.

I am with the tenderest gratitude, the most profound respect, as may well be imagined, and feelings which I cannot express,

Your majesty's, &c.

L E T T E R CXXVII.

From the King.

Charlottesville, Jane 22, 1740.

FROM bowers of Remusberg no more I write;

Much lov'd and much regretted haunts!

Poet and king confus'd,

Co-mingled are; not can the troubled mind,

By thoughts o'er-peopled, order reinstate.

Sweet dreams of poetry, delusions bright,

Avaunt! Henceforth a nation's wants

Me claim. Self-doom'd were I, by self accus'd,

Did claims so strong with equal strength not bind.

On me what burthens hast thou laid, oh Fate!

Arts, pleasures, friendship I discard;

Yes, even thee, Voltaire!

Nor dare to murmur, dare to grieve.

Duty's my deity. My people's good,

Well understood,

Must be my care:

Here pleasures must I seek, here find reward.

But,

But, this perform'd, with lightning's speed will I
To th' open arms of friendship fly,
Thy lessons to receive ;
Lessons which thou'l delight to give,
While I from thee shall learn to govern and to live.

You perceive, my dear friend, that the change of my destiny has not cured me of the mania of rhyming, and perhaps it never will. I have too much esteem for the art of Horace and Virgil, to renounce it ; and, according to my opinion, there is a time for all things.

I had begun an epistle, *Sur les Abus de la Mode et de la Coutume**, at the very moment when custom, and the right of primogeniture, obliged me to ascend the throne, and for a time forsake my epistle. I would willingly have changed my epistle into a satire against this same custom, had I not known that satire ought to be banished the mouth of princes.

In fine, my dear Voltaire, I am distracted by twenty different occupations ; and deplore the brevity of the day, which appears to me too short by twenty-four hours.

I will frankly confess that the life of the man who exists only for himself, and contemplation, appears to me infinitely preferable to that of one whose only employment is to make others happy.

* On the Abuses of Fashion and Custom.

Your

Your verses are delightful. I will say nothing more of them, for they are too flattering.

Do not any longer refuse me, dear Voltaire, the pleasure to indulge the eagerness I have to see you. Exert every effort which you think humanity ought to make, in my favour. I shall go as far as Wesel, and perhaps farther, at the end of August. Promise to meet me there; for I could neither live happy, nor die in peace, without having embraced you. Farewell.

A thousand compliments to the marchioness. I am at work with both hands; with one for the army, and with the other for the people and the fine arts.

L E T T E R CXXVIII.

From the King.

Charlottenburg, June 24*, 1740.

THE person who will give you this letter, from me, is the man of my last epistle. He brings you some Hungarian wine, in return for your immortal verses, and my bad prose in lieu of your admirable philosophy. I am overburthened, overwhelmed with business; but, as soon as I have a few moments leisure, you shall

* June 21, in the Berlin edition. T.

receive

receive from me the same tribute as formerly, and on the same conditions. I am busied by a funeral, an augmentation, and various journeys, and cares, to which by duty I am subjected. Let me entreat your forgiveness, should this letter, and that which you received three weeks ago, seem to have suffered some little delay. When my hurry shall be over, my mind will then recover its natural elasticity.

By thee inspir'd, from cares and troubles free,
My pleasures and thy praise I'll sing,
In rhyme will reign a very king,
And all shall then be joy, and jubilee !
Yet, if thou would'st indeed increase delight,
Oh hither come, and charm our ravish'd sight !

My muse dictated the last line with trembling.
I know too well that friendship ought to cede to
love.

Farewel, my dear Voltaire ; fail not to love
me a little. Whenever I shall have written any
odes, or epistles, you shall have the first of them.
But you must have patience with me, and give
me time to proceed slowly, in my present path.
Do not forget me ; and be certain that, next to
the care of my country, I have nothing more at
heart than to convince you of the esteem with
which I am

Your very faithful friend.

LETTER CXXIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

The Hague, 1740.

IN this third letter, I ask pardon of your majesty, for my two first, which were not sufficiently laconic.

I have passed the day in consulting the lawyers, and secretly treating with Vanduren, I acted both as attorney and negotiator. I begin to believe I shall succeed, and thus accomplish one of two things; either the work will be for ever suppressed, or it will appear in a manner wholly worthy of its author.

Your majesty may rest assured I will remain here, and that you shall be entirely satisfied; should you not, I should die with vexation. Pardon my affection, divine Marcus Aurelius. It is secretly whispered, here, that your majesty will come to the Hague; and I have further heard that the journey may be to your interest.

To your interest, sire, I certainly wish well; but it does not appertain to me to speak of, or to understand the subject.

All that I know is that, if you come here, you will win all hearts, Dutch though they be. Your majesty has many great partisans here.

I dined

I dined to-day with a deputy from Friesland, named M. Halloy, who had the honour to see your majesty at the army, who means to pay his court to you at Cleves, and who thinks of the Marcus Aurelius of the north much the same as I do. With what pleasure shall I go to-morrow to embrace this M. Halloy ! M. de Fenelon to-day—

The rest is wanting.

L E T T E R CXXX.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R E ,

June, 1740.

YESTERDAY, blest event for your people who dine,
Came two tuns !
Or two fungs !
From your grace ;
Each with rubicond face !
And as like as are brother to brother :
The one was a tun of good Hungary wine ;
And your big-bellied Envoy the other.

If kings are gods, and ambaffadors the images of gods, it will follow, sire, from the fourth theorem of Wolf, that the gods are jolly fellows, and have very agreeable countenances. M. de Camas is a happy man ; not so much because he is the representative of, as that he is again to see, your majesty.

I 2

I flew,

I flew, yesterday evening, to meet this amiable M. de Carnas, sent and sung by his king ; and, from the little he told me, I learned that your majesty lives more than ever like *a man* ; and that, after having discharged your duties as a sovereign, without relaxation, during three parts of the day, in the evening you enjoy the sweets of friendship, which are so superior to those of royalty.

In half an hour we are going to dine together, with the marchioness du Chatelet. Imagine, sire, what her joy and mine will be ! Since the apparition of the baron von Kayserling, we have seen no such day.

May crowns everlasting of happiness follow
The laurels already bestow'd, by Apollo !
May Mars add his wreath, should a conflict ensue,
To determine to whom Berg and Juliers are due !
May your arms and your courage decide this event,
And win those rich lands which are yours by descent !

Your majesty knows that Apollo, the god of verse, killed the serpent Python, and the Aloides. The god of the arts fought like a devil, on the occasion—

To you the god his weapons gave, and lyre ;
Thus men must love you, yet must dread your sword :
Not that destructive wars your wishes fire ;
Though wars you well could wage, and well record.

This

This is rather too much for one man, sir. But you are destined to succeed in all you undertake; for I know, from good authority, you possess that fortitude of mind which is the basis of great virtues. Beside that heaven will undoubtedly bless the reign of a monarch who is a man—a man who, after being thoroughly fatigued with having acted the king all day, has still the goodness to bestow a few verses on his letter, and on me, insignificant as I am—

Yours is the happy art to please,
To write with haste, yet write with ease,
In your last six delightful lines,
In which conspicuous goodness shines,
You rise on generous Bounty's wings,
O'er vulgar wits and vulgar kings.

How adorable is your kind manner of speaking, on the subject of your journey to Cleves!

Too much my constancy you praise.
Yet, know the truth;
Love is, alas, for youth!
But sacred friendship's laws my heart obeys.

I indulge in the most flattering hopes of the beatific vision of Cleves. Should the king of France send the person I wish to compliment your majesty, I will pay my respects to you: should he not, still I will do the same. Will not your majesty suffer a man to come and do

homage to you privately, in his own name, without all the forms of ceremony? One way or other, Simeon will behold his Saviour.

The work of Marcus Aurelius will soon be wholly printed. It has the subject of five of my letters to your majesty, and I sent it according to your own express permission; yet M. Camas now tells me there are one or two passages which will give offence, to certain powers. I myself, however, have taken the liberty to soften those two passages; and I will venture to affirm that the book will be as honourable to its author, be he who he will, as it will be useful to the human race. However, should your majesty feel any remorse, you must be kind enough to expedite your commands; for, in a country like Holland, there is no stopping the avidity of a bookseller, who remembers that his money is in the press. Did you know, sire, how much your work is superior to that of Machiavel, even in style, you would not be so cruel as to suppress it.

I have many things to say to your majesty, on the subject of the academy, which is soon to flourish under your auspices. Will you permit me to present my ideas to you, and submit them to your better knowledge?

I ever remain, with the most respectful and devoted affection, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R CXXXI.

From the King.

MY DEAR VOLTAIRE,

Charlottenburg.
June 27, 1740.

YOUR letters continually give me infinite pleasure; not because of the praises which they bestow on me, but from the instructive prose and charming verses they contain. You wish me to speak of myself like the never-ending abbé de Chaulieu. No matter; you must be satisfied.

Here then follows the Berlin gazette, according to your request.

On Friday evening I arrived at Potsdam, where I found the late king in a situation which made me augur that his end was near. He gave me a thousand marks of kindness, and spoke to me a full hour, on foreign and domestic affairs, with all justness of understanding and good sense imaginable. He repeated these conversations on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday; appearing to be exceedingly resigned, with respect to himself, and supporting his infinite sufferings with unabating fortitude. He resigned the regency into my hands, on Tuesday

morning, at five o'clock ; and took an affectionate leave of my brothers, of all the chief officers, and of me. The queen, my brothers, and I were present, during his last moments, in which he displayed the stoicism of Cato. He died with the curiosity of a philosopher, concerning what passed within himself, at the instant of death ; and with the heroism of a great man, leaving us sincerely to regret his loss, and affording us an example such as we ought to follow, hereafter.

The numerous affairs which have devolved upon me, since this time, have scarcely given me time to grieve. I have supposed, since the loss of my father, that my country claimed me wholly ; and, so supposing, have laboured with all possible diligence, to make the most speedy arrangements for the public welfare.

I immediately began by augmenting the army, with sixteen battalions, five squadrons of hussars, and a squadron of body guards. I have laid the foundation of our new academy, and have acquired Wolf, Maupertuis, and Algarotti. I am waiting for the answers of s'Gravesende, Vaucanson, and Euler. I have formed a new college for trade and manufactures, have engaged painters and sculptors, and am now departing for Prussia, there to receive homage ; without the holy phial, or the useless and frivolous

ious ceremonies which ignorance established, and custom continues.

The life I lead has hitherto been sufficiently irregular; for the faculty has thought proper to order me, *ex officio*, to drink Pyrmont water. I rise at four, take the waters till eight, write till ten, examine the troops till noon, write till five, and in the evening unbend in good company. When I shall have performed my journeys, my mode of life will be more tranquil, and uniform; but hitherto I have been obliged to attend to the routine of business, and to all new establishments in addition; not to mention fruitless compliments to send, and circular orders which I have to give.

The thing most difficult is the establishment of magazines, sufficiently considerable, throughout the provinces, to make provision of grain, enough for eighteen months consummation for the whole kingdom.

But let me change the vapid theme;
Of raptures rather let me dream!
Of that blest hour when, face to face,
I thee shall meet in sweet embrace!
When every sense, and sound, shall be
Confus'd in mingled ecstasy!

Not Orpheus, when grim Pluto, charm'd,
Return'd Eurydice, unharmed,

Not,

Not Grophus with such transport fasok,
Nor trembled, as he touch'd and took
The hand of her he lov'd so well,
To guide her through the depths of hell,
Nor long'd so much a glance to steal,
Nor felt such joys, as I shall feel !

Stern were the pow'rs 'twas his to face ;
Gloomy the gulphs he had to trace.
For many a spectre, sprite, and spell,
In those infernal regions dwell.
Yet, ah, how weak these powers, combin'd,
To those which captivate thy mind !
Them I'd encounter, nay despise,
But not the magic of Emilia's eyes !

I may without rancour, madame du Chatelet,
be allowed to envy you the good you possess,
and which I should prefer to many other pos-
sessions that have been left me.

I return to you, my dear Voltaire; you must
make my peace with the marchioness. Let her
preserve the first place in your heart, but permit
me to have the second.

I suppose my man of the epistle has, by this,
delivered you my letter, and the Hungarian
wine. I pay you in very gross matter for all
the mind you bestow upon me, my dear Vol-
taire; but you must console yourself, for, in the
whole world, you certainly will not find a person
who will enter the lists of wit with you. If friend-
ship

ship be called in question, this I will dispute with any man ; and I assure you it is impossible to love or esteem you more than I do. Farewell.

For the love of God buy up all the edition of
the Anti-Machiavel,

L E T T E R CXXXII.

From M. de Voltaire.

The Hague, July 20, 1740.

WHILE you in easy chariot roll,
And journey tow'rd our arctic pole,
To scatter blessings as you go,
On Lithuanian lands of snow,
With store of gloom, and dearth of wit,
In this thick Belgic air I sit ;
Not still, but jolted, here and there,
In that precise post travelling chair
The Dev'l invented for the damn'd ;
In which fat burgomaster, cramm'd,
By quicken'd pulse and shakes endur'd,
Of apoplexy might be cur'd :
Though French bare bones, and slender back,
Like mine, might well prefer the rack.

At the Hague I yesterday arrived, after having with much difficulty obtained leave of absence--

But

But duty pleads, and I her laws revere ;
 My king's commands to me are ever dear ;
 Only for him awhile could I forsake
 Emilia's presence, or her bondage break.

Your orders seem to me to be positive ; and the kind and affecting bounty, with which your humanity* issued them, rendered them additionally sacred. For this reason I did not lose a moment. I grieved to travel, and not to travel in your train ; but I console myself, since I perform something which your majesty wishes I should perform in Holland. These Dutchmen are

A free but avaricious race,
 That vegetate in pent-up space ;
 In boats exist, and mete out air,
 And water, with right niggard care.
 For both you pay ! Nay more, as dear
 As if they both were pure and clear.
 That knavish herd, booksellers nam'd,
 Fatt'ning on wits less fed than fam'd,
 Like many a preacher in the land,
 Vend what they do not understand.
 From them you Germans buy the trash up,
 Which our French authors cook, and hash up ;

* *Your humanity* was an epithet which M. de Voltaire gave, and continued occasionally to give, the king, in consequence of the distinction, which he had in his former letters dwelt upon, between the *king* and the *man*. T.

Our thread-bare sentiments, new spun ;
 Our novels that *have bad a run* ;
 Paper which we may well call waste,
 And all the refuse of good taste.

The first thing I did yesterday, on my arrival, was to go to the most crabbed and daring bookseller in the country, who had undertaken the affair in question. I once again repeat to your majesty that I had not left a word in the manuscript, of which any person in Europe could have complained ; but, since your majesty was so desirous to withdraw the edition, I had no other will than that of executing your wishes. I had already sounded that enterprizing knave, named John Vanduren*, and had sent a man post, who, by way of precaution, was at least to get back some sheets of the manuscript, which was not half printed, under plausible pretexts : for I knew that my Dutchman would listen to no proposal. In effect, I arrived just in time ; for the rascal had refused to give up a single page of the manuscript. I sent for him, questioned him, and turned him every way ; but he gave me to understand that, having the manuscript in his possession, he would not part with it, for any consideration whatever : having begun, he would finish the impression.

* The Dutch bookseller who first printed the Anti-Machiavel.

When

When I saw I had to deal with a Dutchman, who abused the liberty of his country, and a bookseller, who extended his right of persecuting authors to excess, unable to confide my secret to any person, or to implore the aid of authority, I recollect what your majesty says, in one of the chapters of the Anti-Machiavel, that in negotiation honest artifice may be employed ! I therefore told John Vanduren that I was only come to correct some pages of the manuscript—
“ I am very willing you should do that, sir,” said he; “ come to my house, and I will generously entrust them to you, sheet by sheet.
“ You shall correct what you please, shut up
“ in my chamber, in presence of my family
“ and my journeymen.”

I accepted his friendly offer, went home with him, and really corrected some sheets, which he took, as they were finished, to see that there was no deception. Having thus inspired him with a little less diffidence, I returned this morning into the same prison, in which I was shut up with the same formalities ; and, having obtained six chapters at once, to examine and compare them with each other, I made erasures, and interlineations, of such intolerable and ridiculous nonsense, that it no longer resembled the work. This is what is called blowing up your ship, rather

than suffering it to fall into the hands of the enemy. I was in despair, to sacrifice so beautiful a work; but it was in obedience to the king whom I idolize, and I therefore acted thus most willingly. It is now my very honest bookseller's turn to be astonished, and confounded; and I hope to-morrow to make a reasonable bargain with him, and oblige him to restore what is printed, and the remainder of the manuscript, of which I shall render an account to your majesty.

L E T T E R CXXXIII.

From the King.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Charlottenburg, July 9, 1740.

CERTAIN travellers, returning from the banks of the Frichhaf, have read your charming works; which appear to them an admirable restorative, and of which they had great need, to bring them back to life. I shall say nothing of your verses; though I should praise them much, were I not the subject of them. Deduct a little of the praise, and nothing can be more charming.

My

My huge ambassador, with paunch well fill'd,
Salutes your king, in speech learnit all by rote ;
And, well to prove himself in rhetoric skill'd,
Harangues an inflammation in his throat.

Fleuri returns a babbler of his school,
Wanting a hand ; a courteous squire is he !
My envoy wants an arm ; yet he's no fool ;
Camas has conn'd his task, as you shall see.

The letters of Camas speak only of Brussels.
It is a subject of which he is never weary ; and,
judging from them, it should seem his embassy
was to Voltaire and not to Louis.

I send you the only verses I have long had
time to write. Algarotti gave birth to them,
and the subject is enjoyment. The Italian sup-
poses we inhabitants of the north are not capa-
ble of the same degree of feeling, as the people
who live near the lake Guarda. I expressed my
feelings to the best of my abilities, to prove to
him that our organization is equally capable of
enjoyment. You must judge whether I have
painted well or ill ; but do not forget that there
are moments as difficult to represent as is the
sun, in his meridian splendour : no colours are
sufficiently vivid for them ; and the imagination
of the reader must supply the deficiencies of
art.

I am very much obliged to you for the trouble
you have taken, relative to the impression of the
Anti-

Anti-Machiavel. The work was not yet worthy of being published ; but, from its nature, ought to be considered, and reconsidered, that it may not appear in an incongruous manner, before the public, who are ever inclined to satire.

I shall soon depart for the country of Cleves.

Thy lyre, full on my raptur'd ear,
Shall vibrate sounds divine ;
The joys shall then be mine
Thee to contemplate, thee to hear !

Then shall I view thy piercing eye,
Which could, from native light,
Submerg'd in Nature's night,
Great Nature's secret ways decry.

Those lips, of eloquence the throne,
Those lips, that taste, and sense,
Wisdom, and wit dispense,
At that blest moment shall be known !

Great indeed will be my joy, to see the man whom of the whole world I most love, and esteem.

Pardon my *lapsus calami*, and other faults. I am not yet allowed to study in tranquillity. I must perform my journey : after which I hope to have some moments to myself.

Adieu, charming, divine Voltaire! Do not forget the poor mortals of Berlin, who are diligently preparing to visit the gods of Cirey.

Vale.

LETTER CXXXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE,

August, 1740.

YOUR humanity will not this post receive one of my enormous packets. A trifling drunken accident, among the printers, has retarded the finishing of the work on which I am busied ; but it shall be sent the next time I write. The knave Vanduren, however, is selling his merchandise; of which he has already sold but too much.

Among that true respectful praise
Which ev'ry tongue with justice pays
The work you wrote, one man is found *
(Dull cousin to Cambray, renown'd,
Who tale long-winded did produce)
One man who buzzes zeal's abuse,
And secret warfare on you makes ;
By private mining, undertakes
To blow, with apostolic care,
You and your work the Lord knows where ;
That both may broil, as is but fit,
In priests and Satan's pleasant pit.

* The marquis of Fenelon, ambassador at that time to the States General, and related to the immortal author of *Telmaeus*. He was very religious ; but was an amiable man, and a good officer.

“ Oh

“ Oh wretch profane, who thus could write!
“ Like dog he’s damn’d, in fame’s despite.
“ A sage, a man of worth, is he ;
“ A knave ! a christian knave for me !
“ A son of Rome, with daggers arm’d !”

Thus speaks the zealot, when he’s warm’d !
Of tottering church the tottering stay,
Whose creed is first to stab, then pray ;
One whom, as blockhead, we may jeer ;
But whom, as bigot, we must fear.

He and the Jesuit La Ville *, who is his secretary, begin however to shorten their prolix and insolent phrases, in favour of the prelate of Liege, on which they spoke with too much indecency. The last letter of your majesty has every where produced an admirable effect. Permit me to represent to you, sire, that you refer, in this public letter, to the protestations entered against clandestine contracts of exchange, and to the reasons deduced in the memorial of 1737. As the abridgment I have made of this memorial is the only piece which has been known, and inserted in the gazettes, I flatter myself it is to

* Afterward first clerk (or secretary) for foreign affairs. He forsook the Jesuits; whereas Lavaur, secretary to the marquis de Fenelon, ceded his place to La Ville, that he might assume the habit of Saint Ignatius. This was the Lavaur who afterward acted so singular a part, in the affair of the comte de Lalli.

this abridgment that you refer; and consequently that your majesty is not displeased with me, for having dared to support your claims, with a hand which is destined to write your praises. Yet I receive no intelligence from your majesty, relative either to this subject or to Machiavel.

This is certainly a pleasant country. Would your majesty imagine that Vanduren, having first advertised the sale of the Anti-Machiavel, is therefore, according to law, empowered to sell the work, and thinks he may prevent it from being sold by any other bookseller?

As it is absolutely necessary, however, in order to silence certain people, that the work should assume a somewhat more christian-like guise, I have myself taken charge of the edition, to avoid all dispute; and shall send copies, as presents, into all parts. This conduct will be expeditious, determined, and conciliatory; three things which I think of great importance.

From these dark climes resolv'd to go,
 That arrant hypocrite, Rousseau,
 Of an old Jew th' old parasite
 (The name Du Lis of th' Israelite,
 The richest rascal in the land)—
 Rousseau, I say, with ready hand,
 Five hundred ducats has receiv'd
 From Jacob's son; who thus reliev'd
 His rhymers, indigent and old,
 And gloried in the wit of gold.

But

But gold is vain, when death is near,
And mortal pallsies interfere !
The soul satiric of Rousseau
Must visit, soon, the shades below.

L E T T E R CXXXV.

From the King.

MY DEAR VOLTAIRE, Berlin, Aug. 5, 1740.

I HAVE received three of your letters, in a day of restlessness, ceremony, and weariness; for which I am infinitely obliged to you. All the answer I can at present send is, that I leave the disposal of Machiavel to you; nor have I any doubt but that you will employ this power, so as not to give me any cause to repent of the confidence which I place in you. I entirely depend on my dear editor.

I shall write to madame du Chatelet, in consequence of your request. To speak frankly relative to her journey, it is Voltaire, it is you, it is my friend, whom I desire to see; and the goddess Emilia, with all her divinity, is but the satellite of the Newtonian Apollo.

I cannot yet inform you whether I shall or shall not travel. Know, my dear Voltaire, the king of Prussia is but a political weathercock;

the impulse of certain favourable winds is necessary for my journey, and to determine what must be my route. In fine, I am confirmed in the opinion that a king is a thousand times more unfortunate than a private person. I am the slave of the whims of so many other powers that I never can dispose of myself as I please. Happen what will, however, I flatter myself I shall see you. Oh that you might for ever become one of my flock !

Adieu, my dear friend ! Genius sublime ! First born of thinking beings ! Continue very sincerely to love me ; and rest persuaded that no man can esteem and love you more than I do. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CXXXVI.

From the King.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Berlin, August 6, 1740.

I CONFORM entirely to your opinions; I make you arbitrator, and wish you to judge as you think proper, while I remain perfectly tranquil; for I have committed my interests into good hands.

You must have received a letter from me,
dated

dated yesterday; and here is a second, which I write to you from Berlin. I refer you to the contents of the former. If Emily must accompany Apollo, I consent; but, could I see you alone, I should be better pleased. I should be too much dazzled; I could not support so much splendor at once. The veil of Moses would be necessary, to temper the mingled rays of two such deities.

Here am I, my dear Voltaire, overloaded with business. I labour unceasingly, and must entreat you to grant me a truce: allow me but one month, and I am yours everlastingly.

You cannot increase my obligations to you; or that perfect esteem with which I shall ever remain your inviolable friend,

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CXXXVII.

From the King.

MY DEAR VOLTAIRE.

Remusberg,
August 8, 1746.

I IMAGINE that Vanduren is more troublesome to you than was Henry IV. While you versified the deeds of a hero, you did but write the history of your own thoughts; but,

K 4

while

while annoying a rascal, you tilt with an enemy unworthy to enter the lists with you. My obligation to you is the greater, because of the affection with which you take my interest to heart; nor do I require any thing more, nor is there any thing which would please me more, than to testify my gratitude. Set the press at work, therefore, since it is necessary thus to punish the rascally proceedings of a wretch. Erase, alter, correct, and interline whatever passages you please; I entirely rely on your judgment.

I shall depart for Dantzic, and on the 22d I intend to be at Frankfort; should you be there, I expect that, as I pass, you will come and visit me. But I hold it certain that I shall embrace you either at Cleves or in Holland.

Maupertuis may be said to be engaged to us; but many other men of learning are still wanting, whom if you will point out you will give me pleasure.

Adieu, enchanting Voltaire. I am obliged to quit the most amiable of the sons of men, to wrangle with all kinds of political Vandurens; who, to increase the misfortune, have no Carmelites for confessors.

Continue to love me, and be certain of my inviolable esteem.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CXXXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

Brussels, August 22, 1740.

ANOTHER Solomon, they say,
 To Sheba's queen intends to pay
 Another visit! Former gods
 Have quitted their divine abodes!
 Should hence some Hercules take birth,
 Great would the blessing be to earth;
 Yet frankly be it here confess'd,
 I do not wish the world thus bles'd.
 One god, one goddess, thus to serve,
 Is surely more than we deserve:
 At shrines like theirs let us adore;
 The world and I can ask no more.

Such, sir, is the fact. The world watches my Solomon with the eyes of a lynx. "Is it true," says one, "that he is going to France?" "He will visit Italy," replies another; "and they will elect him Pope, for the renovation of old Rome. Will he pass through Brussels?" Wagers are laid for and against. "If he should," says madame the princess de la Tour, "he shall have apartments in my house." "Oh no, and please your royal highness, not so: should his majesty come to Brussels he will choose to be exceedingly private there; and he

‘ he and his amiable suite will be entertained by
 ‘ Emily. Her house is the last in the city : re-
 ‘ moved from the crowd and their Brussels high-
 ‘ ness ; here he will be as much at his ease as
 ‘ in your palace ; though her hired house is not
 ‘ so magnificently furnished as yours.’

Such are my thoughts. But how does the princess de la Tour act, in the country where she now is ? She sends, in all haste, to enquire of madame du Chatelet whether your majesty will pass this way ; and madame du Chatelet replies, there is not a word of truth in the report, but that the whole is a fable. Not so satisfied, she immediately sends off couriers, to learn the truth. People, sire, are very curious. We need but have it inserted, in the gazettes, that your majesty will visit Aix-la-Chapelle, or Spa, and we shall put the newsmongers off their scent. Should it however be true that your humanity will pass through Brussels, I entreat you will be pleased to bring some English drops * in your pocket, for I shall faint in ecstasy.

M. de Maupertuis is at Wesel, there to observe and measure your majesty. He never has seen, nor ever will see star of such happy influence.

The affair of the Anti-Machiavel is in a very

* Des gouttes d'Angleterre.

good

good train, for the instruction and happiness of mankind. Your subjects, sir, are fortunate, which they are not backward to proclaim : but I shall be even more fortunate than they are, at the beginning of September.

I am, with the most profound respect, and a hundred other inexpressible sentiments, &c.

L E T T E R CXXXIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R E,

Brussels, September 1, 1740.

MY king is at Cleves ; a small house is ready for him at Brussels, and a palace almost worthy of him at Paris, while I am waiting here for my master.

My beating heart proclaims the moment near,
When I shall view the man I most revere !
The king, whose presence must high bliss afford ;
The poet, whom full often I've ador'd ;
And hear, from him, of taste and truth those laws
Which Rome had listen'd to with loud applause !

Oh Paris ! Abode of the noble and the frivolous ; of good and ill taste ; of equity and injustice ; great emporium of whatever is good and beautiful, ridiculous and malignant ; render thyself

self worthy, if so thou mayest, of the conqueror whom thou wilt receive within thy irregular and bemired walls ! May he observe thee, himself unobserved ; and enjoy all thy pleasures, without the incumbrance of royalty ! May he see, yet not be seen, except when he shall please ! Fortunate house of Du Chatelet, that art the residence of the Muses, and containest the gallery of Hercules, and the hall of Love !

Abodes of bliss ! The pencils of Le Sueur
And great Le Brun, with magic art,
To you did erst impart
Genius sublime ! As wonderful as rare !

The sisters nine themselves just pref'rence give
To you, and here their temples build ;
In prophecy well skill'd,
They knew the guest you're fated to receive !

By what I can learn from this great city of Paris, I think it will be necessary that a word should be inserted in the gazettes, concerning a letter from your majesty to M. de Maupertuis, which has been printed. There have, no doubt, been some omissions made in the incorrect copy which has appeared. To any other person, these would be a matter of small signification ; but you, sire, are observed by all Europe. Men speak of the provinces, and the ministers, of other monarchs ; whereas they converse on you
your-

yourself ; they examine you, weigh your words, and already judge of you, and them, with severity proportionate to your merit, and your fame.

Pardon, sire, the frankness of a heart which adores you. Perhaps I am importunate ; but no matter, since this heart is guilty of no offence. Should your majesty think with me, you will send the news-writers the short paragraph I have here added ; if not, you will view my too scrupulous affection with indulgence ; remembering that whatever in the least affects your person, to me is sacred ; small things then appear to me vast in their magnitude.

Pardon my zeal, though you should not approve ;
'Tis the first feature in the face of love.

L E T T E R CXL.

From the King.

MY DEAR VOLTARE, Wefel, Sept. 2, 1740.

ON my arrival, I received three of your letters ; the prose of which is charming, and the verse divine. I should have answered immediately, had I not been prevented by a fever, which has attacked me here, in very ill time ; and the more so as it deranges the whole plan which I had formed.

You wish to know what has become of me, since my departure from Berlin. Inclosed is a description. I shall not visit Paris, as has been rumoured; it was not my design to go there this year. Perhaps I may make a journey into the Netherlands. In fine, the fever, and my impatience at not yet having seen you, are the two objects which most occupy me at present. I will write to inform you, as soon as my health will permit, where and when I shall have the pleasure to embrace you.

FREDERIC.

I have seen a letter written by you to Mau-pertuis, than which nothing can be more charming. I again return you a thousand thanks, for the trouble you have taken at the Hague, relative to the affair you wot of. Continue your friendship for me everlastingly. I well know how estimable are friends of your worth.

L E T T E R CXLI.

From the King.

Wesel, September 5, 1742.

OF his office as proud as a lord of the land,
Sieur Honi came here, with your passport in hand * :

* Alluding to an epistle, in verse, which M. de Voltaire sent, by the wine-merchant, Honi, to the king.

Of Bacchus a worthy disciple is he.
For pity I begg'd—"Mr. Honi, you see,
" Of your liquor no longer can I be receiver.
" Would you have a man drink when he's dead of a fever?"

To this he replied—"From Apollo I hold
" (Of physic and verse he's the god, as I'm told)
" Prescription so potent that, please but to read,
" You'll to death bid defiance, from fever be freed."

The verse, sign'd Voltaire, soon my fancy inflam'd ;
I read ! And I read ! And in raptures exclaim'd—
" Blest art ! which the dying to strength can restore :
" Blest bard ! whom all nations and times shall adore ;
" Thee let me embrace, let me hold to my heart !
" Fly, Honi, I follow ; for Flanders depart ;
" For the seat of the muses, of Venus the shrine !
" Thy motive is interest, gratitude mine.

I wait for to-morrow, as the day which is to decide my fate, when the prognostics of fever or of cure will appear. Should the fever leave me, I shall be at Anvers on Tuesday se'nnight, where I flatter myself I shall have the pleasure to meet you and the marchioness. This will be the most delightful day of my life. I believe I shall expire ; but a more delightful kind of death I certainly could not have chosen.

Adieu, my dear Voltaire ; a thousand times I embrace you.

FREDERIC.

L E T .

LETTER CXLII.

From the King.

MY DEAR VOLTAIRE, September 6, 1740.

I HAVE been obliged, in my own despite, to cede the victory to the fever; which is more obstinate than a Jansenist; and, however ardent my wish to go to Anvers, and from thence to Brussels, I do not find myself able to undertake the journey, without risk. I have therefore to ask whether you will not think it too far to come from Brussels to Cleves, to meet me. This is the only remaining means I have to see you. Surely you must own I am very unfortunate; for now, when I could have disposed of my person as I should have pleased, and when no over-ruling power could have disappointed me, a fever interferes, seemingly with an intention to dispute my enjoyment of this pleasure.

Let us, my dear Voltaire, deceive this fever, and let me have the satisfaction to embrace you. Fail not to pay my excuses to the marchioness, that I cannot have the pleasure to see her at Brussels. My whole court is a witness of the intention I had to come, which nothing but the fever would have prevented.

On

On Sunday I shall be at a small place near Cleves, where I can enjoy your company entirely at my ease. Should the sight of you not cure me, I will send for the priest, and confess immediately.

Adieu. You know my sentiments, and my heart.

F R E D È R I C.

L E T T E R CXLIII.

From the King.

September 8, 1740.

I DARE not talk to a son of Apollo of horses, coaches, relays, and such trifles. They are matters with which the gods do not interfere, and which we mortals take upon ourselves. You will, if you please, depart on Monday in the afternoon for Bareuth; and, if you think proper, you may dine with me as you pass.

The remainder of my memorial is so blotted, and in such bad condition, that I cannot send it you. I have ordered the eighth and ninth cantos of the Maid of Orleans to be copied. At present I possess the first and second, the fourth

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and fifth, and the eighth and ninth. I keep them under three keys, that they may not be seen by mortal eye.

We are told you supped yesterday in good company—

The wits of all the district came,
And sat assembled in your name :
Men worthy well the feast to share ;
All zealous for their god, Voltaire ;
For they decreed that place to own
As heav'n, where you should fix your throne.

Pray observe that the word *beaven* is here understood, in a general sense, as a place of joy and pleasure. I refer you to your own remark on the last line of the Mundane*. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

* This remark no longer subsists : it had been made by M. de Voltaire, to avoid the clamours of hypocrites, who pretended to take offence at the line—

“ *Le paradis terrestre est où je suis.*”
Where pleasure is, my paradise is there.

L E T-

L E T T E R CXLIV*.

From the King.

September, 1740.

I ONCE more thank you, with all possible gratitude, for every trouble which you have taken with my works. I have not the smallest objection to make to what you have done; except that I regret the time you have thus wasted on such trifles.

Let me entreat you to inform me of the expences, and the sums advanced by you, for the impression; that I may, at least, pay my debts in part.

From you I expect comedians, men of learning, works of wit and of science, and an infinity of emanations from your great mind. I have nothing to return but much esteem and gratitude, and that perfect friendship with which I am entirely yours.

FREDERIC.

* This letter is not in the Berlin edition. T.

LETTER CXLV.

From M. de Voltaire.

The Hague, September 22, 1740.

NOR death, nor sickness, in the least
As yet disturb our kingly priest ;
Him vainly England's wish would send,
In heav'n, eternity to spend.
He eats and drinks, and dines and sups,
And laughs and jokes, and takes his cups,
With rosy cheek and vivid eye,
As if he never meant to die !

Thou, tyrant Fever, know'st no fears ;
Thou fetter'st kings the world reveres.
Avaunt ! and give my hero ease :
Begone ! our cardinal to seize ;
Or fifty cardinals at once,
Fat monks, rich abbots, friars, and nuns,
The Pope himself, and all his court ;
These make thy victims, these thy sport :
Such vermin haunt, torment, infect ;
But Frederic leave in peace and rest.

I send my adorable master the Anti-Machiavell, such as it is at present beginning to be printed. Perhaps the copy will be rather difficult to read, but time presses. It was necessary to have copies, to send to London, Paris, and Holland ; and afterward to read and to correct all those

those copies. Should your majesty think proper to have the one I send transcribed, and should you revise it, and wish alterations to be made, I am here but to obey your commands. It is an affair which, as it personally regards you, I have very much at heart. Continue as you have begun, most amiable man, as well as great prince! Man so little like to other men; and like to other kings in nothing!

Cæsar* at chapel daily counts his beads;
 Such he is told are worthy deeds.
 To idiot indolence inclines
 The monarch of the mines†;
 His old confessor and his youthful wife
 Lead him a woeful life.
 Yarmouth, the Dutchbred beauty,
 Sways royal George, and keeps him to his duty.
 Of Louis praise or silence is the due;
 He is my king—would it were you!

M. de Fenelon came the day before yesterday to question me concerning your majesty. I told him that you loved, but did not fear, France; that you delighted in peace, yet was more capable than any man of making war; that you laboured to make the arts flourish, under the protection of the laws; that you acted wholly

* The Emperor of Germany. T.

† The king of Spain. T.

for and from yourself, yet that you listened to good advice. He afterward spoke of the bishop of Liege, whom he seemed rather to excuse. But the bishop is not the less wrong; of which there are *two thousand* proofs at Maseck*.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R CXLVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R E,

October 7, 1740,

I FORGOT to inclose, in my last packet to your majesty, the letter of the sieur Beck, which obliged me to return to the Hague. I am ashamed to trouble your majesty with so many discussions, relative to an affair which ought to proceed without difficulty.

I have made an acquaintance with a very prudent young man, possessed of understanding, literature, and morals. He is the son of the unfortunate M. Luisius, whose father I believe had no other fault than that of not being sufficiently careful of a life, which he had devoted

* The king invaded the principality of Liege, to enforce the payment of a very old debt; and M. de Voltaire wrote him a justificatory memorial.

to the service of his master. The son aids me in my little negociation, with all imaginable discretion and sagacity. I take the liberty to assure your majesty that, should you have any occasion for a secretary, and should you admit him into your service, or deign to employ him in any other manner, and form him to busines, he is a man with whom your majesty would be exceedingly well satisfied.

I am too much attached to you, sire, to speak thus to you of any person unmeritedly. He is well informed in what relates to busines, although so young; he has worked under the direction of his father, and is in possession of more than one state secret. The more I am acquainted with him, the more I find him to be prudent and discreet. Your majesty will not repent of having taken the baron von Schmettau into your service; and I think that, in a different way, you would at least be equally well pleased with young Luisius. I am like the devout who seek only to bring souls over to God. I wait till I have put every thing into a proper train, that I may quit the field of battle, and return to my other sovereign, at Brussels. In the mean time I remain in your palace, where M. de Raesfeld has given me an apartment, under the good pleasure of your majesty. Your palace

at the Hague is the emblem of human grandeur—

The spacious chambers, worthy of their king,
Of rotted planks and ruin'd roofs complain.
Woe, cries the howling wind, to pannel gilt,
And stuccoed wall ! For doors the damps have eaten,
And windows fall the prey of storms and time.
Here I behold, in armory apart,
Cuirasse and rusty breast-plate, faulchion huge,
And target such as none but heroes wield ;
Vast, and awful in their antiquity ;
Mocking these puny times ; reminding us
What warriors were, and what your ancestors.

There are also books which, for the space of fifty years, have been read only by the rats, and which are covered with the largest cobwebs in Europe, to shield them from the approach of the profane.

Were the Penates of this palace able to speak, they would no doubt exclaim—

Why in neglect and dust do we remain ?
Of this great king why have we to complain ?
From him his kingdom each good gift receives ;
Yet us in ruin and contempt he leaves.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R CXLVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R E,

The Hague, October 12, 1740.

I FIRST entreat your majesty to read the inclosed letter, written by young Luisius, in which you will see what are in general the sentiments of the public respecting the Anti-Machiavel.

The English envoy, M. Trevor, and all who have the least claim to information, unanimously approve the work. But I believe I have before informed your majesty that the same cannot be said of those who have less understanding, and more prejudices. In proportion as they are obliged to admire all which they perceive to be eloquent and virtuous in the book, they endeavour to blacken whatever has the appearance of being somewhat free. They are owls, offended at the blaze of day; and unfortunately there are too many owls in the world. Though I have retrenched, or softened, many of those strong truths which irritate feeble minds, there are still some remaining in the manuscript that was copied by Vanduren. All men of letters, all philosophers, and all worthy people, are satisfied

satisfied with the book, which ought to please all the world ; for it is a work written for all men, and all ages. Translations of it will appear in five or six languages.

The exclamations of monks and bigots ought not, I imagine, to vanquish the praises of the remainder of the world. They declaim, they write, they are the authors of journals. There are even certain passages in the Anti-Machiavel by which a malignant minister might profit, to irritate certain powers.

With a view therefore to remedy these inconveniences, I have worked day and night at the new edition, the first sheets of which I send to your majesty. I have only softened certain touches in your admirable picture ; and I think myself almost certain, these trifling corrections being made, which do not diminish the beauty of the work, that no person will ever think he has reason to complain ; and these instructions for kings will pass to posterity as sacred writings, against which none will blaspheme.

Your book, sire, must resemble yourself ; it must inspire general pleasure. The meanest of your subjects love you ; and the most limited of your readers must admire.

You cannot but suppose that a secret, known to so many people, will soon be known to the whole

whole world. A man of Cleves asked, while your majesty was at Moiland—" Pray is it true " that our king is one of the most learned men, " and a man of the greatest genius, in Europe? " I have heard he has undertaken to refute Ma- " chiavel!"

Your court has talked on this subject for these six months ; all which renders the publication of the edition I have undertaken necessary ; and of which I shall distribute copies throughout Europe, to bring that of Vanduren into discredit, which is indeed very defective.

If, after having compared the two, your majesty should think me too severe, if you wish to preserve some passages, or to add others, you only need so to say. As I mean to purchase half of the new edition of *Paupie*, to send as presents, and as *Paupie* has already sold the other half to his correspondents, I shall in a fortnight begin a new and more correct edition, which shall conform to your majesty's intentions. It will be particularly necessary immediately to know on what your majesty shall determine ; in order to direct the persons who translate the work into English and Italian. It is a monument for the latest posterity ; the only book worthy of a king which has appeared for these fifteen hundred years. Your glory is the subject in question,

for

for which I have almost as much affection as for your person. Be pleased therefore to send me precise orders.

Should your majesty not think the edition of Vanduren sufficiently suppressed by the new edition, and if you wish me to buy up as many copies as I can of the former, you have only to send me your commands. I will likewise buy up as many as I can without affectation in other countries; for he has begun to send his book abroad. It is one of those knavish tricks for which there is no remedy. I am obliged here to maintain a law-suit against him: the intention of the rascal was to keep both the first and the second editions to himself. He wished to print from the manuscript which I endeavoured to get back from him, and even that which I have corrected, and to cheat under the cloak of the law. He founds his claims on having received the first manuscript from me; and asserts that he alone has a right to print the book. Well may he act thus; for the two editions, and those which must follow, would make his fortune: I being persuaded that any bookseller in Europe, who should have the sole copy-right to himself, would at least gain thirty thousand ducats.

This man has given me much trouble; but a word under your majesty's hand will be my con-

solation. Of this I have great need, for I am on a bed of thorns.

I live in your palace ; and, though it be true that I do not put your envoy to any expence, yet, after a certain time, a guest becomes troublesome. I can neither leave it nor live in it with perfect propriety, unless your majesty shpuld write a line to your envoy.

To this packet I add the copy of my letter to the wretched curate with whom the manuscript was deposited ; for I wish your majesty to be informed of every step I take.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R CXLVIII.

From the King.

Remusberg, October 1740.

I AM ashamed of being three letters in your debt, but still more ashamed of the continuance of my fever. Truly, my dear Voltaire, we are poor creatures ! A very trifle disorders and subdues us.

I have profited by your advice relative to the bishop of Liege, and you will see my claims printed in the gazettes. The affair however is drawing

drawing to a conclusion; and, in a fortnight, I imagine my troops will evacuate the county of Horn.

Cesario has answered you, relative to M. du Chatelet ; and I hope you are satisfied with his answer.

I own I repent having written the Anti-Machiavel ; for the disputes into which you ate dragged with Vanduren will make a kind of bankruptcy, in the world of literature, during fifteen days of your life.

I wait for Mahomet with great impatience.

Will you be kind enough to engage the comedian who is the author of Mahomet II. and enjoin him to raise a company of players in France, and bring them to Berlin, by the first of June 1741 ? It is necessary the company should be a good one, and complete, both for tragedy and comedy; and that the principal parts should be doubled*.

* By this the king means, other actors should be ready to play the principal parts of those actors to whom they were allotted ; should the latter, from any accident, be unable or unwilling to perform. This is a general custom in France, so that the spectators are not, as in England, deprived of the play advertised ; though they are frequently obliged to be satisfied with a second-rate set of actors. The principal actors often refuse to appear. T.

I have reconsidered and changed my opinion concerning the gentleman who understands so many languages*, and you will do me a pleasure to send him to Berlin.

Bernard speaks in the language of an adept; and does not wish to print books, but to make gold.

If I am able, I will put the tortoise of Breda in motion. I will even write to my minister, at Vienna, in behalf of M. du Chatelet, whose interference may perhaps be of service to her. Salute that rare and estimable lady, on my part; and rest persuaded that Voltaire, while he shall continue to exist, will never have a better friend than

FREDERIC,

L E T T E R CXLIX.

From the King.

Remusberg, October 11, 1740.

HE comes! Urania's fav'rite son!
With him the muses come;
Except immortal Emily,
Who stays and weeps at home.

* M. du Moulard.

Fancy,

Fancy, on whom the Graces wait,
Beholds him from afar ;
His orbit pictures, and transports
Him in her magic car !

The mind, prophetic, oft forebodes
When bliss unhop'd is near ;
The mind, prophetic, now predicts,
Voltaire will soon be here !

Now blind and stupid Ignorance
Begins with fear to shake ;
Thou com'st, and thy bright blaze of woes
Her midnight Imps forsake !

Enjoyment laughing with thee comes ;
And Pleasure opes the door :
The Wishes, Smiles, and Sports, and Loves,
Impatient, on us pour.

Genius, where'er she may reside,
From banks of Thames or Tee,
From Tagus, Tyber, Po, or Seine,
Takes flight to welcome thee.

The Arts revive, fair Science rears
Her long-sepulchred head ;
Their saviour comes, his voice is heard,
The tombs give up their dead !

I may at last flatter myself I shall see you this year. I shall not act like the inhabitants of Thracia, who, when they made a banquet for the gods, took care first to eat the marrow themselves. Apollo shall be received by me as he deserves :

deserves : for our Apollo is not only the god of physic, but of philosophy, history, and, in fine, of all the arts—

As all that's exquisite, in fruits,
Concentrates in the pine ;
So all that's exquisite, in art,
Voltaire, is duly thine !

You talk to me concerning my health, and think me full of prejudices, while I think it my misfortune that I have too few—

Hippocrates, and all his saints,
In vain would I adore :
Pois'nous to me their drugs and pills ;
Then why their aid implore ?

Of saints, indeed, the trade I hold
In little estimation ;
Knaves, fools, or madmen, them I deem,
Whate'er their sect or nation.

For you, ye quacks, forbear to vaunt
That ye can life impart ;
Wisdom and Fate but laugh to view
The antics of your art.

The lawyer, proud in argument,
To save the world from harm,
His well-cloth'd client naked leaves,
Then asks him—" How ! Not warm ? "

Thus priest, physician, lawyer, all
Unite—an awful trine !
One cries, Your purse ! Your life ! the next ;
The third, Your soul is mine !

But lawyer, empiric, and priest,
Of noble pedigree,
Assassins, rascals, traitors, hence!
You 're not the men for me.

I have entirely read Machiavel, and, to own the truth, am not quite satisfied; for which reason I am determined to change what does not please me, and to print a new edition, at Berlin, under my own inspection. With this intent I have sent an article to the public papers, in which the author of the work disavows the two editions. I ask your pardon, but I could not act otherwise; for there are so many alterations in your edition, that it is no longer my work. I have found the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters very different to what I wished them to be; and it will be the employment of the winter to new-model the book. Let me however entreat you not to mention my name too freely, for this gives me no pleasure. You know likewise that, when I sent you the manuscript, I exacted inviolable secrecy.

I have taken young Luijus into my service. As to his father, he escaped, I believe, about a year ago, from the country of Cleves; and I think it will be a matter of great indifference where the lunatic ends his life.

I know not at what place you will receive this letter, but shall be very glad should it meet you

near

near Prussia. Every thing is prepared for your reception, and I wait the moment to embrace you with impatience.

Many thanks for what you have written in my favour. Friendship with you has no limits; my gratitude is equally unbounded *.

Your marquis † and your Dutchmen doze
On down, and vent their dreams;
Out-stretch'd at ease, the world reform,
And me reprove, it seems.

So let them idly loll and preach,
I envy not such bliss:
'Tis certain those who nothing do
Can never do amiss.

L E T T E R CL.

From M. de Voltaire.

The Hague, October 17, 1749.

TO Berlin soon the mock-majestic race,
With ruffle, sword, bag-wig, and unwash'd face,
Hail, rain, and thunder, poniard, trumpet, drum;
Silk rage, and patch-work finery, shall come;

* This paragraph, and the following verses, are added from the Basile edition. T.

† The ambassador, Fenelon.

Laws and religion, human and divine,
Nightly to teach, that they next day may dine :
With hero stalk and stamp, and beggar pride,
Enacting how the mighty Cæsar died ;
And how, in robes Dutch-gilt and linen foul,
The world he rul'd, with strut, and rant, and howl.

Half woman and half feather, head and heel,
Hear dwarfish heroine Dido's woes reveal
To fix-foot confidante ; whose virtuous tears
Are interspers'd with wanton winks and leers,
At lovers aim'd, who wait till weeping queens
Retire to cure their griefs, behind the scenes.

God be praised that your majesty has made the generous resolution soon to take pleasure. This is the only advice I have dared to give ; but I defy politicians to give better. Recollect the constant pain in your side ; a disease which labouring in the cabinet will increase, and which pleasure will cure. He who renders others happy deserves happiness himself ; but will not obtain it, if he have a pain in his side.

At length I send you copies of the new edition of the Anti-Machiavel. I think I have taken the only part which remained to be taken, and that I have obeyed your sacred commands. I persist in believing it was necessary to soften some passages, which might have given offence to the feeble, and disgust to certain politicians. I repeat that such a book has no need of such

ornamental parts. The ambassador Camas would be thrown off the hinges, were he to encounter these tickling maxims at Paris, which however he practises a little too much. The very devout will be your admirers. They are no partisans of mine, indeed; but I am more cautious in your behalf than in my own. It is necessary that my dear and respectable monarch, the most amiable of kings, should please the whole world. After the ode of Gresset, there is no possibility, sire, that you should conceal yourself. The mine is blown, and it is requisite boldly to appear on the breach. None but Ostrogoths and Vandals can think it wrong that a young prince, of twenty-five or twenty-six, should employ his leisure to render men better, and to instruct them while instructing himself. You made yourself wings, when at Rheinsberg, on which to mount to immortality. Though you will discover every road to fame, yet this is not the least glorious of paths—

Witness the god whom Titus bow'd before,
Nor blush'd Aurelius at his shrine t' adore;
Blasphem'd by bigots, worshipp'd by the wise,
Whose gifts my monarch shall immortalize.

Young French officers are daily coming here, who, when asked what is their intention, answer

M 3

they

they are going to seek employment in Prussia. There are at present four of my acquaintance, one of whom is the son of the governor of Berg-Saint-Vinox; another is sub-major of the regiment of Luxembourg; a third the son of a president; and the fourth the bastard of a bishop. One has run away with a girl; another has run away with himself; this has married the daughter of his taylor; and the fourth wishes to turn player, till he can obtain a regiment.

I have heard intelligence, by which my tolerant spirit is enraptured: your majesty has invited the poor anabaptists back, who had been driven out of Prussia, I do not very well know why—

If John exorcise, or be exorcis'd;
If he have twice been, or not once, baptiz'd;
Be sacraments, or be they not, his due;
If he be Christian, Brachman, Turk, or Jew,
I ask not, What is country, faith, or birth?
I only ask—" Is John a man of worth?"
While he respects the magistrate, and laws,
While he is virtuous, he has my applause.
Your saints can feed on faith, however crude;
For me, I find it unsuststantial food.

LETTER CL.

From the King.

MY DEAR VOLTAIRE,

Remusberg,
Oct. 24, 1740.*

I AM a thousand times obliged to you for the good offices you have done me; for the man of Liege, whom you have vanquished; for Vanduren, whom you keep in awe; and in fine for all your acts of friendship. In a word, you are the guardian of my works, and the fortunate genius whom no doubt some beneficent being has sent to support and inspire me.—

Ungrateful mortals, senseless hearts of stone,
 Whom acts of human courtesy disown,
 Abjure your selfish arts, hear Virtue's claim,
 Admission grant to Friendship's sacred flame.

Oh Friendship! Child of heav'n! By heav'n endow'd
 With all the gifts of which the gods are proud!
 Jealous Affection, burning Zeal, are thine;
 And all that renders man, mere man, divine!

* The date in the Berlin edition is October 21, 1740.

Souls high in virtue dost thou seek, and bind
 In th' unseen fetters of congenial mind ;
 Souls that the smiles or frowns of Fate disdain,
 Souls that o'er Fate herself unshaken reign !

Nysus ! Euryalus ! Immortal pair,
 Sacred to friendship ! Dauntless, noble, fair !
 Wife in the captivating bloom of youth ;
 Victims of patriot-love, and mutual truth !

Yes, matchless youths ! Fame has to you decreed
 That freshest, fairest wreath, blest Friendship's meed !
 Nor Time leagu'd with Oblivion, Merit's foes,
 Shall wrest the blooming honours from your brows.

Yet, hark ! I hear a more exalted name ;
 One whose demands are higher still on Fame ;
 Voltaire, resounding, fills astonish'd space !
 Friendship's high-priest, in office first and place.

Mornay * had long the splendid station held,
 For far had Mornay modern friends excell'd ;
 Hearing thy name, respectful he retir'd,
 And thus address'd thee—Truth his bosom fir'd :
 “ From duty I my sov'reign's rights maintain'd ;
 “ Traitors my sword, my tongue, my pen disdain'd :
 “ Motives more gen'rous still thy bosom knows,
 “ With secret acts of love thy friendship glows.
 “ By virtues properly thy own supplied,
 “ By thee my worth made known, by thee outvied :
 “ In giving fame thou but inspirest awe ;
 “ When thou appear'st 'tis fit that I withdraw.”

* Warrior, ambassador and friend of Henry IV.; and one of the principal characters in the Henriade. T.

Thus

Thus spoke the sage ; each cherubim-fraught cloud
His words to listening earth repeats aloud :
The listening earth rever'b'rates back th' applause :
And Truth, Voltaire, and Friendship, gain their cause !

While heav'n and earth combin'd the sounds renew,
Yet do but grant the praise that is thy due,
In France, exerting friend's prerogative,
For thee I plead, that tyrants may forgive.

Gift of the godlike ! Friendship, be thou mine !
Thy virtues, nay thy weaknesses, divine !
Thou art of magnanimity the source ;
Venus compar'd to thee wants love, Alcides force.

I am exerting my whole rhetoric with Hercules* de Fleuri, to try whether he may not be humanized, relative to yourself. You know what a kind of animal a priest, a politician, and an obstinate man is ; and I most particularly entreat you will not render me responsible for the success of my solicitations. He is a Vanduren, seated on a throne—

This red-capp'd Machiavel, whom False Report,
Evasion, Quirk, and new-born Lye surround,
Rears now and then his crest, and Worth makes blush.
Strange that, unless th' old Idol be perfum'd
With myrrh, frankincense, and Arabia's spice,

* Hercules was the christian name of cardinal de Fleuri. T.

Unless

Unless his praise be trumpeted aloud,
Murder! Decorum 's murder'd, is the cry!
I know thy heart, where lurk nor abject praise,
Nor dastard fear: thou greatness dost not worship.
Sincere and upright, frankness such as thine
But ill can please this old, this mitered monarch.
To charms of Philis, ay or Emily,
What tho' divine, thou Freedom dost prefer.
Born for her arms, the mistress of thy heart
The splendid beauty reigns; and reign still might,
Would'st thou but hither come, and join with me
In worship at her shrine. And ah! Why not?
Can none but France, ungrateful France, true pleasures
yield?

There is an additional paragraph to this letter, in the Berlin edition, which contains the substance of letter CXLIV. It is difficult to say whether it were or were not a separate letter. T.

L E T T E R CLII.

From M. de Voltaire.

The Hague, October 25, 1740.

O H lovely Hope! Delightful-shade!
 With bliss thou dost the soul pervade.
 Say, shall I see the king, whose art
 Enraptures and subdues the heart?

'Tis odd enough, but we are told
 By Mr. Bible (author old)
 That Moses saw his God, I ween,
 Although he was not to be seen,

 With bold assertion, one verse says,
 He view'd Jehovah face to face ;
 Another frankly dares to teach
 He spoke with nothing but his breech,

The book incongruous has been call'd ;
 No matter though the text be bald,
 Or whether lips that gave the wind
 Before were station'd, or behind.

'Tis very clear his God he saw,
 From him receiv'd his written law.
 Your laws, I own, give more delight ;
 There's greater rapture in your sight !

I've seen the monarch twice, I'll say,
 Who ready homage deigns to pay
 To Love, when Love is pleas'd to call ;
 To Mirth, when Mirth laughs in the hall.

Pallas

Pallas and Mars to him are known;
 To ev'ry noble art he's prone;
 And Minos' laws, and Muses' lyre,
 His genius exercise, and fire.

And yet he swerves, oh strange to tell!
 From precepts which he knows so well:
 Himself neglecting, back he flies,
 And with a buring fever dies!

The prince of Hesse has this moment assured me, sire, that the king of Sweden, having long been of your majesty's opinion, and having suffered under a kind of continual fever, at length yielded in obstinacy to the disease, took the bark, and is cured,

Earth's kings collective must indeed
 Blushing before my king recede;
 His soul is far a brighter flame:
 Alas! His body 's much the same.

If, in the climate of Sweden, a king, whether he be or be not the partisan of France, be cured by the Jesuits' powder, why will you, sire, not take this powder?

To Loyola, in this, obedience shew;
 Let your Lutheran spirit prove
 He little knew of things above;
 But take the bark, and own his pow'r below.

I wish, sire, to travel to Berlin, accompanied by

by a packet of the powder of bark. In vain would your majesty continue your labours, while afflicted with the fever, and employ your leisure in writing the prose of Cicero and the poetry of Catullus. If you continue to neglect this accursed fever, I shall incessantly be uneasy.

If it be your majesty's wish that I should, for a few days, be happy enough to pay you my court,

My heart, and this my meagre frame,
Are prompt your bounteous smiles to claim :
Nor is my promptitude unknown ;
You 're well convinc'd my heart 's your own.

I shall be under the indispensable necessity of returning soon to Brussels, to aid madame du Chatelet in her law-suit, and to quit Marcus Aurelius for chicanery. But where is the man who is master of his own actions? Have not you yourself an immense load to bear, which frequently, by the necessity of fulfilling your sacred duties, impedes the gratification of your inclinations?

I am, &c.

LETTER CLIII.

From the King.

MY DEAR VOLTAIRE,

Remusberg,
Oct. 26, 1740.

THE most unexpected accident on earth at present prevents me from opening my heart to you, as usual, and prattling as much as I wish.

The Emperor is dead—

To monarchy not born, he first was king,
Emperor next; Eugene his glory was;
But, to the heraldry of future fame
Derogatory, bankrupt has he died.

His death deranges all my pacific ideas; and I imagine that, in the month of June, there will be more talk of gunpowder, soldiers, and fortified towns, than of actresses, balls, and theatres; so that I am obliged to suspend the agreement into which we were to have entered.

My affair with Liege is terminated; but the present business is of much greater consequence to all Europe: it is the moment of total change in the old system of politics. It is the stone hewn out of the rock without hands, in the dream of Nebuchodonosor; and which, falling upon the four metals, destroyed them all.

I am a thousand times obliged to you for the finished impression of Machiavel. I can do nothing more at it, at present, for I am overloaded with affairs. I shall send my fever about its business, having need of my machine, and it being necessary that every advantage should be taken which the moment affords.

I send you an ode, in answer to that of Greffet.
Adieu, dear friend. Never forget me, but remain persuaded of the tender esteem with which I am

Your very faithful friend.

L E T T E R CLIV.

From the King.

Remusberg, November 8, 1744.

ABOVE the clouds, with rapid flight,
Soon art thou lost to mortal sight ;
While crawling here, on earth, I rove ;
The sport of thunder-bearing Jove,
Of malice, and of furious zeal ;
Which last hath oft made mortal feel
Such torments as, from justice swerv'd,
Itself alone could have deserv'd.
But leave we bigots preaching folly,
Howling to make men melancholy.

Of fell exploit, and warlike deed,
Of thrones, and pow'rs, and princes, read

The

Thou willing would'st, in book which Fate
Ne'er man permitted to translate ;
And book that ne'er was read t' explain
Might puzzle a very learned brain.

Go search the records of the dome
By Voltaire built, for Henry's home ;
Fame's temple, where in blooming youth,
Spotless and pure, stands naked Truth.
There ev'ry question thou shalt ask
To solve will be an easy task.
But, if thy curious wish demand
Fantastic figures by my hand,
I take the brush, and sketches draw,
Exceeding all that Callot * saw.

First then behold ma'am Glory's pot;
By stoker fiend kept boiling hot ;
While lunatics, in search of fame,
Gaze at and snuff the fumes and flame.

With visage black, and fiery brand
Whirling aloft in either hand,
Turn here and view a spectre grim,
A female of distorted limb,
Such jargon muttering, in her fears,
As never struck on mortal ear !
Suspicion her support; and Pride,
Through dark uncertainty, her guide.
Groping in doubt and dread she creeps,
And never smiles, and never sleeps.
Implacant harpy ! Hear her name !
'Tis Policy ! From hell she came ;
She and the dam that gave her birth,
Int'rest—Their end ? To trouble earth !

* A famous designer of the grotesque.

T.

Their

Their imps and they, on envy's wings,
Pervade the courts and hearts of kings ;
Nations embroil, and hatred spread,
And rage, that die not with the dead.
And, hark ! I hear the thund'ring drum !
Of madd'ning heroes thousands come ;
Rape, murder, sacrifice they pursue ;
And while exultingly they view
The flow'r of manhood mangled, slain,
The shrieking infant, bleeding plain,
The wasted field, the burning town,
They vaunt of valour and renown !

Loud swells the storm ! Of crowns bereft,
Of honour stript, in misery left,
The potent and the proud I see !
No more—The rest I leave to thee !
All I omit, where, when, and why,
Thy rapid fancy can supply.
Shift thou the ghastly scene of death ;
For, wanting words, and out of breath,
Offended, sick'ning at the sight,
My muse half frighten'd takes her flight.

This is an excellent history of the things which you foresee. Had Don Louis Acunha, cardinal Alberoni, or the mitred Hercules, any secretary who should present them with similar plans, I imagine he would quit their cabinet with the loss of a pair of ears. You must however be satisfied for the present. I leave you to imagine as much more as you shall please. With respect to the affairs of your own private politics, we will

consult on them at Berlin; and I imagine I shall soon have the means of rendering you perfect satisfaction.

Adieu, dear swan. Let me occasionally hear you sing; but not, according to the fiction of the poet, by surrendering your soul on the banks of the Simois. I wish to receive your letters, and to see you in good health, even better than you are in at present. You know the esteem I have for you, of which you are persuaded.

LETTER CLV.

From M. de Voltaire.

Herford, November 11, 1740.

HERE trav'ling post to Paradise,
Through ruts of snow and hills of ice,
Some fiend malignant, griev'd to see
My car roll onward firm and free,
A storm first rais'd of rain and hail,
Comes me behind, and whisks his tail;
Crash! Down I go, and out I roll:
And here am left by this damn'd soul!

With pride imprudent oft did I
Fortune in former times defy:
But I recant: her secret springs
Govern coach wheels, as well as kings;
One king excepted, pray take note.
To her my pray'rs I thus devote—

“Te

" To meet thy master, yet thy pride,
 " Oh lady, grant my steps to guide !
 " Smile and accord this happy day,
 " And be the world beside thy prey.

Fortune, sire, has been too envious of my access to your majesty. Far from granting my prayers, she has just broken down the coach which was bringing us to the promised land, on the Herford road. Du Molard, the Orientalist, whom I bring with me into Prussia, according to your majesty's orders, pretends that never had pilgrim of Mecca a more vexatious accident in Arabia; and that the Jews, in the wilderness, were not so much to be pitied.

Here one servant scampers to request aid from the Westphalians, who imagine he is come to ask for something to drink; another runs he knows not whither. Du Molard, who promises himself to write the narrative of our journey in Arabic and Syriac, is as capable of using his hands and legs as if he were not a man of learning: he is gone on discovery, half on foot, half in a cart; and I, in my velvet breeches, silk stockings, and galoshes, am mounted upon a restive horse,

Without saddle, or shoes, a most sorrowful elf,
 Astride on a courser as lean as myself!

You'd have ask'd, had you seen, while your fides must have
split,
Can this be that animal men call a wit?
Thus wander'd, as we by Cervantes are told,
Through forests and deserts, Don Quixote of old:
He griev'd not, and sure I've less cause to repine;
His goal was Toboso, but Potsdam is mine!

Arriving at Herford thus equipped, the sentinel demanded my name. I very properly answered Don Quixote; and under this name was admitted.

When shall I be able to throw myself at your majesty's feet? At those of your creature, your admirer, your — &c.

LETTER CLVI.

*From M. de Voltaire *.*

A fragment.

I leave my king, 'tis true ; but my torn heart
Tells how reluctantly, how griev'd I part.
Four years in faith this heart has never err'd,
Ten years affection still must be preferr'd.

* This, being one of M. de Voltaire's letters, is not in the Berlin edition; and is with strange inaccuracy ascribed to Frederic by the Basil editors. T.

Hercy

Hero of friendship, I appeal to you,
 If yours the first, is not the latter due?
 I love, yet leave; my mistress chides my stay;
 I hear, I turn, I figh, yet willingly obey.

Your ode is perfect, and I should feel envy
 did I not feel rapture. I cast myself at the feet
 of your humanity. I have dared tenderly to
 attach myself to the most amiable of men: I ad-
 mire the protector of the empire, of his subjects,
 and of the arts.

L E T T E R CLVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

Cleves, December 15, 1740.

I RIGHTLY foretold that Berlin shuld be queen
 Of the arts and the pleasures, as Athens had been.
 And when Algarotti the tender has pres'd
 The handsome Lujac, his young friend, to his breast,
 I've thought I beheld, with exception of age,
 Alcibiades lock'd in the arms of the sage.
 Not the flat-fac'd, the black-brow'd, the large-fronted
 Grecian;
 But the blue-eyed, the Roman-nos'd, charming Venetian*.

Of Venice and Greece let me prattle no more.
 For Frederic I quitted what most I adore—

* Count Algarotti was a native of Venice. T.
 N 3 My

My books and my mistress ; to hear and admire
The strong yet mellifluous sounds of his lyre.
He struck ! And its harmony told me to stay ;
But the trumpet discordant now drives me away.

Undaunted, the temple of Janus you throw
Wide open to wretchedness, warfare, and woe,
While you with a passion so different burn,
Confus'd to the Temple of Love I return ;
At Emily's feet my just homage to pay,
And henceforth the precepts of beauty obey.

I pray Heaven, fire, that peace and war may
favour all your grand enterprizes; and that I may
again soon meet my hero at Berlin, loaded with
a double wreath of laurel, &c.

L E T T E R CLVIII.

From the King.

MY DEAR VOLTAIRE, The quarters of Herendorf,
Dec. 3, 1740.

I HAVE received your two letters, but
have not been able to answer them sooner. I
am like the check-mated king of Charles XII,
which still kept moving. During this last fort-
night we have been continually on the foot, and
have the finest weather possible.

I am too much fatigued to answer your charm-
ing

ing verses, and too cold to taste all their beauties ; but these troubles will pass away. Ask not poetry from a man who has actually turned carter ; and is sometimes even a very bespattered carter. Do you wish to know the life I lead ? —We march from seven in the morning till four in the afternoon. I then dine. I afterward work, and receive dull visits ; to which succeeds a routine of insipid affairs. I have the scrupulous to convince, the ardent to restrain, the idle to make active, the choleric to cool, the rapacious to contain within the bounds of equity, the prolix to hear, and the mute to converse with. In fine, it is necessary to drink with the drunkard, to eat with the glutton, and to become a Jew with Jews, and a heathen with heathens.

Such are my occupations, which I would willingly yield to another, did not the phantom called Fame pay me too frequent visits. This is truly a great folly ; a disease for which, being once imbibed into the habit, it is difficult to find a cure.

Adieu, my dear Voltaire. May Heaven preserve from danger him with whom I wish to sup, after having fought this morning. The swan of Padua *, I imagine, will profit by my absence,

* His sweet, his dear, his harmonious swan of Padua, were epithets bestowed by the king on count Algarotti, who had studied at Bologna and Padua. T.

and make a tour to Paris; the philosophic mathematician * will square the circle; the philosophic man of letters † will translate from the Greek; and the learned Doctissime ‡ will do nothing, or something perhaps very like nothing.

Once again, dear Voltaire, adieu. Do not forget the absent who love you.

LETTER CLIX.

From the King.

Ohlau, April 16, 1741.

THE sweets of studious ease I know;
Ne'er of Epicurus the foe,
In pleasure's arms I well could doze,
And oft on poppy-beds repose.

But Fame officious, led by Truth,
Comes and disturbs my ardent youth;
The acts of all her heroes reads,
And bids me shame their highest deeds.

I pleasure love; but ah my guide
Must duty be, austere in pride!
Monsters more fierce would I subdue
Than all Alcides overthrew.

* M. Maupertuis. T.

† M. de la Croze, as I imagine. T.

‡ M. Jordan. T.

To

To vindicate the Prussian name,
The proudest of the proud to tame,
To strip away the bigot's mask,
Were surely no unworthy task.

That fancied angel, Happiness,
Who mortal seldom deigns to blesia,
Rarely, so much she man derides,
In this land or in that resides.

On Prussian or Silesian ground
No more I'll seek what can't be found ;
But, firm of purpose, still will I
The friend of wisdom live and die.

The Austrians, it is said, have been beaten, and I believe the report to be true. You see the lyre of Horace takes its turn, after wielding the club of Hercules. To perform my duties, to be capable of pleasure, to tilt with the foe, to be absent yet not forget my friends, are things which assimilate well together, provided that bounds be assigned to each. Doubt of every thing, if you please, except that I wish you never to entertain scepticism relative to the esteem I have for you. Be persuaded that I love you ever. Adieu.

LETTER CLX.

From the King.

The camp of Molwitz, May 2, 1741.

FROM this portative city, so light
That it shakes with each gust of the wind,
Where brick, mortar, and stone
Are unknown ;
Where, ill at our ease,
We sleep under trees,
In fields that are gloomily glorious ;
Where Prussia's proud warriors, victorious,
Their fugitive enemies chase ;
From this oddly-built city I write,
Where cruel ambition displays
The blood-dripping banners of Mars,
To prove human pity a farce ;
I write to my friend, who, reclin'd
On the temperate bosom of peace,
The loves and the pleasures unites ;
The living instructs and delights,
Of wisdom the stores to increase.
While I, where contentions are bred,
Am doom'd to behold,
Amid nations untold,
Heroes number'd each day with the dead !

This is all my warlike muse has to say, here seated in a cold camp. I do not dwell on the delicate minutiae of sensibility, for there is nothing refined in the manner in which we here converse,

converse. This I continually regret ; and, while I subject the obedient fury of my troops, it is continually at the expence of my feelings, which suffer under the necessary evil which I cannot avoid committing.

Marshal de Belleisle is come hither, with a suite of very intelligent men. I imagine very little understanding can be left among the French, after what has been exported by these gentlemen of the embassy. To see Frenchmen who are not lunatics that ought to be manacled, is thought a very strange phenomenon in Germany. Such are the prejudices of nations. Of these some people of genius rid themselves ; but this is mud in which the vulgar are continually bemired : error is their inheritance.

To you, who combat error, be health, prosperity, and glory everlasting !

Adieu.

L E T T E R CLXI.

From M. de Voltaire.

May 5, 1741.

ONCE I believ'd one common soul was ours ;
Which yet is much, for fools have none, we find ;
But no—so vast, so wondrous are your pow'rs,
Earth's sum of fools you might supply with mind.

Pallas,

Pallas, 'tis plain, your politics directs ;
Your lyre, Apollo ; Mars your foes subjects.
Your bed a gun, your canopy the sky ;
Neuperg and all his host before you fly.

Cæsar, your patron, letters lov'd and arts :
Of kingdoms conquer'd, and his own deserts,
He boldly wrote ; and what he wrote remains ;
But wrote he verses on Pharsalia's plains ?

Your pen, the flying Austrian in the field,
You ardent seize, while yet your sword you wield :
This I foresaw, great king, nor would oppose ;
My genius yields submissive as your foes.

To write verses, and charming verses, after
a victory, sir, is a thing unique in its kind, and
was consequently reserved for your majesty. You
have beaten Neuperg and Voltaire. Your
majesty ought to inclose laurel leaves in your let-
ters, as did the old Roman generals. At once
you merit the triumph of the victor and of the
poet, and two laurel branches at least are your
due.

I hear that Maupertuis is at Vienna. I pity
him more than any one ; but I pity all who are
not near your person. Colonel Camus, it is said,
is dead, very much vexed that he was not killed
in your majesty's presence. Major Knobertoff
(whose name I write improperly) has had this
gloomy honour ; from which God preserve your
majesty !

majesty! I am certain, great king, of your fame; but not so of your life. Amid how many dangers, and how many labours, do you pass this glorious life! Leagues to anticipate or break, allies to procure or to retain, sieges, battles, plans—such are the acts, such the trifles of a hero. Perhaps you will enjoy every thing except happiness.

You can make an emperor, prevent an emperor being made, or make yourself emperor. Should the latter happen, your majesty will not therefore to me be the more sacred *.

I am very impatient to dedicate Mahomet to that adorable majesty. I have had it acted at Lisle, where it was performed better than at Paris; but, however great the emotions which it excited, they do not equal the emotions my heart feels, when I recollect all your heroic acts.

* Sacred is one of the titles which accompany the dignity of emperor. T.

LETTER CLXII.

From the King.

The camp of Molwitz, May 13, 1741.

THE Paris gazettes affirm you are at the point of death, and that madame du Chatelet never moves from your pillow. They made me tremble for the life of a man whom I love, at the moment when the receipt of your letter informed me this same man was full of life, and still my friend.

It is not my brother who has been wounded, but prince William my cousin. On this fortunate and unfortunate day we have lost many good subjects. I tenderly regret some friends, the memory of whom will never be effaced from my heart. Sorrow for friends slain is an evil which Providence has deigned to annex to success in war, in order to temper that immoderate joy which is raised by advantages gained over our enemies. The loss of brave men is the more sensibly felt, because the debt of gratitude is due to their manes; which is a debt I never shall sufficiently discharge.

My present situation will soon lead me, my dear Voltaire, into new dangers. Having felled a tree, it is good to cut away the very roots;

left the old stock should send forth new scions. We have therefore to see what we can do with this tree, of which marshal Neuperg may be regarded as the sap. I have conversed much with marshal de Belleisle, who in all countries would be what is called a very great man. In what relates to war, at least, he is a Newton; and as amiable, in private life, as he is intelligent and profound in public affairs. He does infinite honour to his nation, and to the choice of his master.

I wish with my whole heart to hear none but good news concerning you; in which be persuaded no one interests himself more than your faithful friend.

L E T T E R CLXIII.

From the King.

The camp of Grotkau, June 2^d 1741.

ATTAINING ev'ry art with ease,
Especially the art to please;
A volunteer in Venus' wars,
You who on us and our hussars
A thought bestow; who well have told
Of Locke the sage, and Charles the bold;
And, while you sing the wise and brave,
Of woman are the willing slave;

Ruling,

Ruling, though rul'd, as is but fit,
The realms of wisdom and of wit ;
Accept, from camp in which platoons
Give fire for fire, and fierce dragoons
Cut, hack, and hew, that they may dwell
On feats which they perform so well—
Accept a sketch of this our life,
Exhal'd in turbulence and strife.

Cæsario young, and Jordan short,
Have both been here to pay their court ;
Tully and Horace with them came,
And some few other folks of fame.
Wits, politicians, here have been ;
Heroes and marshals have we seen ;
Soldiers we've view'd, whose worthy trade
Is impudence, and ambuscade ;
While falsehood, stratagem, and trap ;
Mine, battery, battle, and mishap ;
All these have pass'd before our sight :
While Atropos, with fiend-like spite,
Has cut and mow'd down men like grass.
And yet the multitude, that as,
By nature saddled to be ridden,
Has proudly march'd to death when bidden.

Should I be happier, what though more
Follies had pass'd these eyes before ?
With you of wisdom's cup to drink ;
Of pleasures taste, yet tasting think ;
With you to live, converse, and cares dismiss,
This, or I know it not, were perfect bliss !

Neither my brother nor the Knobelsdorf, whom
you are acquainted with, were in the battle. The

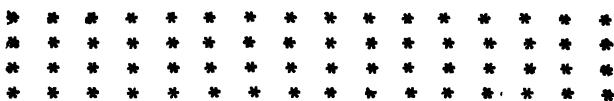
persons, who had the misfortune to be killed, were one of my cousins, and a major of dragoons, named Knobeldorf.

Let me hear from you oftener, continue to love me ever, and be persuaded of the esteem I have for you. Adieu.

L E T T E R CLXIV.

From the King.

The camp of Strehlen, July 5, 1741.



The publication of your history gives me great pleasure; nor will this be a trifling laurel, in addition to those with which the hand of immortality is preparing to bind your brow. It is your glory that I cherish. I am interested in the Age of Louis XIV. I admire you as a philosopher, but I love you much better as a poet.

Sublime in rapturous harmony and fire,
Oh Horace! who would not prefer thy lyre
To those gigantic strides which pedants take,
Who trade in worlds, and sleepy systems make;
Who vainly fluids, heat, and air dissect;
And hunt for errors they can ne'er detect?

One man writes a philosophical romance; another mounts with much difficulty, and adjusts the different ramifications of a system which is the offspring of his own silly brain.

In dreams let us not lose our time ;
In pleasures we should spend our prime.
Fair science little progress makes,
By round assertion and mistakes :
He who would search her mysteries out
Must first learn modestly to doubt.

History and poetry present the mind with a field much more free, and treat on subjects more capable of general comprehension. The one relates facts ; the other presents pleasing pictures. True philosophy consists in fortitude of soul, and that perspicacity of mind which prevents us from falling into vulgar errors, and believing in effects without a cause.

Yours no doubt is beautiful poetry, and contains whatever has been best effected by the poets of antiquity.

As graceful as the beauteous dove,
Your muse the mother seems of Love,
Whene'er, in language sweet, yet strong,
Love is the subject of her song ;
But, when of war she paints the course,
Hers is the dreadful thunder's force.

You and your muse transform yourselves into
what

what you please; but it is not given to all to act the Proteus, like you. We common mortals are obliged to be satisfied with that trifling talent which avaricious Nature has deigned to bestow.

I have no news to send you from the camp, for here we live in the utmost tranquillity. The hussars are the heroes of the piece, during the interlude; while ambassadors harangue me, while Silesian cuckoldom thrives, and while &c. &c.

My compliments to the marchioness. With respect to yourself, you cannot but be persuaded of the perfect esteem and friendship I shall ever maintain for you. Farewell.

P. S. Poor Cesario is ill at Berlin, whither I have sent him to be cured; and Jordan, who is just arrived from Berlin, is quite fatigued with the journey.

L E T T E R CLXV.

From M. de Voltaire.

Brussels, June 29, 1741.

OF different men how different is the doom!

A vig'rous youthful eagle, full in plume—

(But not th' Imperial; he has long surviv'd

Those claws and beak of which he 's been depriv'd)

Daring, has glory waken'd to renown ;
 Glory that slept far distant from the throne.

A cunning fox * lies watchful, in his den,
 For chickens, straying from the clacking hen.

An artless dove, nor warrior he, nor knave,
 In antique dove-coat seeks himself to save.

This dove forlorn am I ; far off I view
 The royal bird the timid flocks pursue.
 Ah ! Were I less a dove, and did I dare,
 How would I rise and cleave the yielding air !
 How would I hover o'er my hero's head !
 Nay haply too, o'erta'en, in mortal dread,
 Stript, pillag'd by hussars, like Maupertuis,
 Neuperg I might in plight distressful see ;
 Recalling to his mind how great his foe,
 With plaintive song, might soothe him in his woe.

Pleasures so sweet, and glory like to this,
 Accords not heav'n my pray'rs, nor grants such bliss.
 But, what though wings of eagles are denied,
 Your progress to attend is Fancy's pride.
 With you she marches to the proud Breslau,
 To Molwitz-field, and ramparts of Glogau.
 From Vi&t'ry's wing she sees you pluck the quill,
 With which, on head of drum, you write at will,
 In sportive ease, with diction neat and terse,
 The playful fiction, and the wealthy verse.

Hindford and Ginkel, ye of barb'rous name,
 That put the cadence of my verse to shame,
 Wherefore approach him thus, with studied art ?
 Or wherefore, Valori, thy schemes impart,
 Theirs counteracting ? Know ye not your wiles,
 Your pressing arguments, and court-set smiles,
 To him familiar, nothing can avail ?
 He knows on which side int'rest turns the scale ;

* Cardinal de Fleuri. T.

What

What friend or treaty's most with wisdom fraught:
 In pow'r a king, a king in act and thought,
 The wonder of the world, the first of men,
 Both with the sword he governs, and the pen.

His pen indeed is my delight, and pride :
 Th' affairs and fools that swim down each day's tide
 Having dispatch'd ; of politics and war,
 Of envoy, plenipo, ambassador,
 (Deceivers all, and often all deceiv'd)
 Of camps prescrib'd, of marches, guards reliev'd,
 Poltroon disgrac'd, the warrior brave preferr'd,
 Of bread, and oats, and forage having heard ;
 These and five hundred other imps of care
 Dispatch'd—I say, he writes to me, Voltaire ;
 Forgetting all the splendors of a crown,
 With lighten'd heart and happy fits he down ;
 His crowding thoughts no intermission know,
 And sweetly does the verse begin to flow.

George, Louis, Charles, are high-born kings, and great ;
 But poets I prefer to pomp and state :
 Nor Bourbon's sons, nor Austria's daughters, e'er
 Compos'd one verse, to ease my heart of care.
 I prize not sceptres, globes, or ancestry ;
 Or let them rhyme, or they're no kings for me.
 Frederic, write on, with wits and foes contend ;
 Be still a warrior, but be still my friend.

The most prosaic of your servants, sire, can
 rhyme no more. I am at present deep in history, which daily becomes more dear to me, perceiving as I do the illustrious rank you there will hold. I foresee that your majesty will some

day amuse yourself with writing the narrative of your two campaigns. Happy the man who shall be your secretary; and thrice happy he who shall be your reader. It is for Cæsar to write his own commentaries. I entreat you, messieurs de la Croze and Jordan, lend me your old books, and your new lights, to discover the ancient truths I seek. But, when I attempt to write the age of Frederic, permit me to have recourse immediately to our hero. Oh! Jordan, how happy art thou! Thou, who seest this hero, and hast beside a noble library.

Not so I: here have I no hero, and very few books. I am industrious nevertheless; for the indolent are not formed to give Frederic pleasure.

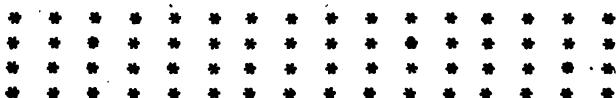
His noble ardour wakes, in me,
The active soul of industry.
For action heaven men decreed;
To labour some, and some to bleed:
King, poet, ploughman, warrior, priest,
By labour find their joys increas'd.
My hero's joys how num'rous then;
All life, all act, the first of men!

Of your majesty, of your humanity, of your activity, of your understanding, and of your heart, I am the admirer and the subject.

L E T T E R CLXVI.

From the King.

The camp of Strehlen, July 22, 1741.



After the sentence which you have pronounced, seated on your Helicon, I must only write to you in verse. Of this I take advantage, that I may win your affections. Were you the mediator between me and the queen of Hungary, I would plead my cause in verse; and my old rhyming documents should serve as the amusement of my pacifier. There certainly will not be so much of hiatus, in the history which you are writing, as there is of void in our campaign. But our inactivity will not long continue; though we suspend the blow, it is but to strike in a more certain and more remarkable manner.

To you I recommend the interests of the divine age which you so elegantly depict. I would rather have written this work than have gained a hundred battles.

Adieu, dear Voltaire. When you made war on your booksellers and your other enemies I

wrote ; and at present, while you write, I am at
cut and thrust : but so goes the world.

Doubt not of the perfect friendship with which
I am entirely yours.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CLXVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

Brussels, August, 3, 1741.

IN genius premature, sublime,
Parnassian heights with ease you climb,
Nor let nor hindrance meet :
O'er war and death you tow'ring fly ;
Of verse the dangers you defy ;
Nor fear nor know defeat.

Of Fame the favour'd lover, you
Wish I should hist'ry's path pursue,
And glorious deeds recite ;
While, from the temple of renown,
On vict'ry's wing, you deign look down,
To guide me as I write.

But no, 'tis yours ; oh arduous task !
Of you to paint those beams we ask
Which round your visage blaze.
Thus Cæsar wrote ; thus Cæsar fought ;
And him, in mighty deed and thought,
You rival ; we but praise.

Le

Lo with what gospel complaifance
Our mild king-cardinal of France,
That mildness to denote,
With cannon, bombs, and pioneers,
Four armies sends, tow'rd our frontiers,
Peace solely to promote.

Not he, but Jordan is my pride,
With impious Englishman allied,
On bigots war to make ;
That gloom-bred idol to destroy
Which knaves knew fools might best decoy,
And bid the world awake.

The royal sage, as brave as good,
Julian the wife, well understood
How dang'rous priestly pride :
This he had rooted from the world,
Its gods and altars down had hurl'd,
But that too soon he died.

Of truth be thou the rising sun ;
Conclude the work by him begun ;
Fair freedom's thine to give :
Let indignation nobly rise !
Of zeal, with all her hell-born lies,
Break thou the chains, and live.

A sage and monarch, why shouldst thou
Fear what thy fathers * durst avow ?
Or why thy wrath subdue ?
They found too long they'd been enslav'd,
And, pious curses having brav'd,
Chastis'd the monkish crew.

* The ancestors of Frederic, in the fourteenth century, expelled the priests.

More

More politic, alas! than they,
Thou folly leav'st the lawful prey
Of that deceitful race.
Fanatics, seiz'd with fears, long since
Complain'd that thou, a christian prince,
Hadst little christian grace,

From all their whims and vice exempt,
Thou turn'st away, in just contempt,
And leav'st them to their will:
Thus Folly plum'd o'er Wisdom reigns,
And vulgar prejudice remains
Of kings the tyrant still.

Thus your majesty combats only with princes, and leaves Jordan to oppose the sacred errors of this world. Since he could not become a poet, in your majesty's company, may his prose be worthy of the king whom both he and I are ambitious to imitate. I flatter myself that Silesia will produce a good work, against what you wot of.

After having read the beautiful verses which you sent me, from the environs of Neiss, I cannot but remark that, had not your majesty happened to go to Silesia, French verses would certainly never have been there written. I imagine that you are more occupied than ever at present: but this does not terrify me; and, having received such charming verses from you the day after

after a victory, there is no miracle that will astonish me.

I do not cease to hope that I shall be fortunate enough to obtain a narrative of your campaigns; like as I obtained one of your journey to Strasburg, &c.

L E T T E R CLXVIII.

From the King.

The camp of Reichenbach, August 24, 1744.

TO cleanse th' Augean stable wherefore doom
My feeble arm ? Madrid, Geneva, Rome,
Processions, inquisitions, autos, bulls,
With all their hydra-sects, can I repulse?
Ah ! Know me better, friend ; nor once believe
In miracles, which I shall ne'er achieve !

That ancient monster, which the world adores,
Religion, whose false aid false fear implores,
By Ignorance begotten on Caprice,
Of yore was chas'd, by dauntless Truth, thro' Greece ;
In terror too, at Rome, she shrieking fled
When bold Lucretius' sword hung o'er her head.

Even you, though arm'd with ridicule and wit,
Desirous she to reason should submit,
Wishing she might the world no more annoy,
Ev'n you in vain the forc'rets would destroy !
Man's wayward age, once prejudic'd in youth,
Puts more faith in the gospel than in truth.

Indeed

Indeed dame Nature, when she deign'd devise
The thing call'd man, ne'er meant to make him wife,

Logic to teach, and bid him understand,
Were labour lost, on ox that ploughs the land.
'Twere wiser far to gain the hard-fought field,
And conquest snatch from foe full loath to yield ;
To crush to dust, where dangers dire preside,
The scorpion Envy, and the viper Pride ;
To conquests end that long have been begun,
And win that great renown our great forefathers won.

Unworthy common-sense should interpose,
In error's dreams leave we the world to dose.
What are its dreams to me, if I but hear
Thy verse mellifluous strike my ravish'd ear ?
Or if returning peace and Pallas bring
To me the arts, and thee, on willing wing ?
Through vale and grove we'll stray, till foliage brown
Shall bid us taste the pleasures of the town.

Abjuring Mars, and war's destructive pow'rs,
Epicurian transports shall be ours :
And while our joys in flowing cups we quaff,
At madmen and at madmen's schemes we'll laugh,
Be metaphysics yours, ye babbling crew ;
Projectors, the perpetual motion is your due ;
Ye quacks, the grand elixir find and vend ;
Ye statesmen, Machiavel shall be your friend :
Elect of God and Christ, the grace divine
And faith be yours ; be this world's blessings mine ;
Contented I with wisdom, wit, and love,
To you I leave the joys of heav'n above.

Jordan translates his English author with the same fidelity as the Seventy translated the Bible.

I imagine the work will soon be finished. There are so many excellent things which may be said against religion, that I am astonished they should not enter the minds of all people. But men are not made for truth. I regard them as a herd of deer, in the park of a great lord; and suppose their only function is to well people their inclosure.

I imagine we shall soon fight. This is mad work! But what is to be done? We must be mad some time in our lives.

Adieu, my dear Voltaire. Write to me oftener; but take care not to be offended, should I not have time to answer you: Of my sentiments you cannot be ignorant.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CLXIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

Cirey, December 21, 1741.

P A L E torch of winter, father of old Earth,
To whom 'tis said we poets owe our birth,
Dwarfs tho' too oft we are; fay, glorious sun!
Why at such distance, ere the year's begun,
Leav'st thou Berlin? Know that within her walls
Lives the fam'd youth the world its wonder calls!

Within

Within his glowing heart and mind, I grant,
 Bright flames the fire thou suffer'st us to want.
 Lo, as thou fleest our black'ning hemisphere,
 The vanquish'd walls of Neiss his laws revere !
 Ah, wherefore tow'r'd the burning torrid stray,
 Its dark nymphs visit with thy blaze of day?
 From eastern chambers come illustrious forth;
 My hero imitate, shine out and bleſs the north !

Thus, fire, did I this morning address myself to your comrade the sun, which is certainly the soul of a part of this world. I should have said much more to him, concerning your majesty, had I the same facility in writing poetry which I no longer, but which you so perfectly possess. I have received the verses which you wrote at Neiss with as much ease as you took the town. This little anecdote, added to the lines which your humanity sent me immediately after the victory of Molwitz, will one day furnish very singular memoirs for the aid of history.

Louis XIV. took Franche Comté, during the winter; but he neither gave battle nor wrote verses, in the camp before Dole, or before Besançon. I therefore take the liberty to inform your majesty that the history of Louis XIV. appeared to me a circle too confined; I have discovered that Frederic will enlarge the sphere of my ideas. The verses which your majesty wrote, at Neiss, resemble those which Solomon made, in all his glory, when, having tried all, he said

—“ All is vanity ! ” True it is the good man talked thus, surrounded by three hundred wives, and seven hundred concubines ; and without having fought battles, or laid siege. But no offence, sir, to Solomon and you, or rather to you and Solomon, let him say what he will, there is something real in this world.

Of conquest tir'd, and war's alarms,
 Return t'enjoy the Muses' charms :
 Return, and give the brave and fair
 To taste of pleasure, after care !
 To be victorious, lov'd, and fear'd,
 In war renown'd, in peace rever'd ;
 Of private life the charm and pride,
 The people's boast, the kingdom's guide,
 The man of busines, and the bard
 Whom Greece and Rome would deign reward,
 And whom posterity shall own
 Worthy alike the lyre and throne—
 All these to be might sure content
 Each wish that fancy could invent !
 And he who has them well may deem—
 Pleasure is not all a dream.

Your majesty has performed many things in a short time. I am persuaded no person on earth is more occupied, or more hurried away by a variety of affairs, of every kind. But, with such a spacious genius, which embraces every kind of subject, you fail not to preserve that superiority

terest to court. We are ridiculed, censured, or satirized by gazette writers; our reputation is mercilessly torn by our neighbours; and we are consigned over to all the fiends, while we are loaded with protestations of friendship. But such is mankind; and such are, in gross, the affairs by which I am occupied.

Now tell me whether you have any inclination to barter poetry for politics! The only resemblance between them is, that both politicians and poets are the sport of the public; and the subject of satire to their respective fraternities.

The day after to-morrow I shall depart for Renausberg, again to take up the crook and the lyre. Heaven grant I never more may lay them down! From this sweet solitude I shall write to you with more tranquillity of mind; and perhaps Calliope again may visit me.

I am wholly yours,

FREDERIC.

L E T.

L E T T E R CLXXI.

From the King.

MY DEAR VOLTAIRE, Olmutz, Feb. 3, 1742.

THE wandering demon, by which I have hitherto been possessed, has led me to Olmutz, to repair those errors which my allies are said to have committed. I know not what will be the consequence; but I know that mine is an erratic star. What can you expect from a brain wholly stuffed with hay, oats, and chopped straw? I fancy the only rhimes I shall at present be able to make will all end in hay and pay, oat and moat, straw and claw, &c.

Leave awhile the winds to howl;
 Wait till Mars shall cease to scowl;
 Wait till Peace, with all her arts,
 Jocund for Berlin departs.
 Muse, I must my pipe resign,
 Muse, till thou, with art divine,
 Bidding air with raptures swell,
 Shalt the trumpet's discord quell.

Perhaps I put you off to a very distant day; nothing however can be done at present, and from an ill pay-master you must take what you can get.

P 2

I am

I am now reading, or rather devouring, your Age of Louis the Great. If you love me, send me what you have further written of that work, which is my sole consolation, my recreation, my delight. Employed, as you are, in following your inclinations, and indulging your genius, have pity on a political manufacturer, who works only from necessity.

Could it have been supposed, my dear Voltaire, that a child of the Muses was destined, in conjunction with a dozen grave madmen, who are called great politicians, to turn Fortune's grand wheel for all Europe? It is an authentic fact notwithstanding; nor is it any great honour to Providence.

I recollect, on this occasion, the tale told of a parson, to whom a peasant spoke of his sacramental god with an idiotic veneration—“Pshaw!” said the good priest; “you imagine a great deal more than is true. I, who make such things, and sell them by dozens, know their intrinsic value.”

A superstitious idea is usually entertained by the world, concerning the great revolutions of empires; but those who are behind the scenes generally know that the most magical changes are effected by the simplest machinery, and by dirty scene-shifters, who, were they to appear such

such as they are, would draw on themselves the indignation of the public.

Artifice, ill faith, and duplicity, are unfortunately the prevailing characteristics of most men who are at the head of nations, to which they ought to serve as examples. It is very humiliating that the study of the human heart, in such people, does but lead me a thousand times to regret my dear retreat, my friends, the arts, and independence.

Adieu, dear Voltaire. Perhaps I shall one day recover all that I have at present lost. I am, with all the sentiments which you can imagine,

Your faithful friend,

F R E D E R I C:

L E T T E R . CLXXII.

From the King.

MY DEAR VOLTAIRE,

Sclovitz,
March 23, 1742.

I FEAR to write to you; for I have no intelligence to send, except such as you care but little for, or such as you abhor.

Were I, for example, to say—"The nations
" of the two kingdoms of Germany have left
" their dwellings, to play the cut-throat with

" other nations, of the very names of which
 " they are ignorant; and that they march for
 " this purpose into distant lands, because their
 " masters have entered into a contract with an-
 " other prince, and because two of these princes
 " have combined together to murder a third"—
 You would reply—" They are lunatics! They
 " are fools! They are raging mad! thus to
 " yield to the caprices and the barbarity of their
 " dictators." Were I to inform you that—" We
 " are most carefully preparing to batter down
 " walls which have been built up at a prodi-
 " gious expence; that we are reaping where
 " we have not sown; and that we act the master
 " where no one is strong enough to resist us"—
 You would exclaim—" Oh barbarians! Robbers!
 " Inhuman as you are, the wicked shall not in-
 " herit the kingdom of heaven."—According
 to St. Matthew, chapter the twelfth, verse the
 twenty-fourth*.

Since I foresee all you would say to me on
 such subjects, I shall not mention them to you.
 I shall satisfy myself with informing you that a
 half madman, of whom you have heard mention
 by the name of the king of Prussia, being told
 that the provinces of his ally, the emperor, had

* This is a fanciful, not an accurate, quotation. T.
been

been ruined by the queen of Hungary, flew to his assistance ; that he has joined his forces with those of the king of Poland, to make a diversion into Lower Austria ; and that he has been so very successful, that he shortly expects to induce the principal forces of the queen of Hungary to enter into the service of his ally.

This, say you, is generous ! This is heroic ! Yet, my dear Voltaire, this picture and the former are one and the same. It is the same woman, first seen in her night-cap, and afterward bedecked and painted.

Under how many different faces are subjects seen ! How much do the judgments of men vary ! At night they condemn what in the morning they approved. The same sun which delighted them at rising, wearies them at setting. Hence the fame of those which is first confirmed, afterward destroyed, and then once again re-established. We are mad enough to busy ourselves, during our whole lives, in the acquisition of fame. Is it possible we should thus continue to be cheated by such counterfeit coin, when it is so well known ?

I do not write in verse to you, because I have not time to measure out syllables by the foot. Suffer me to remind you of the History of Louis XIV.; and observe I threaten you with

excommunication from Parnassus, if you do not finish the work.

Adieu, my dear Voltaire. Let me entreat you to bestow a little love on the renegado from Apollo, who has enlisted under Bellona. Perhaps he may one day return to the service of his old master.

I am your admirer, and friend,

F R E D E R I C.

LETTER CLXXIII.

From the King.

Triban, April 12, 1742.

SET up on bridges, hills, highways,
Here wooden saints wait worthy praise
From shivering beggar, who attends,
Frost-bitten blows his finger-ends,
And prays, and hopes he may suppress
His hunger by his holiness.

Here each Bohemian potent count,
Whose ancestors to Adam mount,
While hunting he high feats achieves,
To starve his vassals kindly leaves :
On horse and dog he wastes his pelf,
Till finally he starves himself.

Fat friars how learned, sir ! In what ?
The fav'ry fumes of spit and pot.

Augt.

Aught of the poor, their wants and woes,
Shew me a monk or priest who knows :
The weak and wealthy are their tools,
Themselves the deities of fools.

Your Frenchmen, although they are yawning in Bohemia, are not the less amiable and satirical. Perhaps they are the only people who can find, in misfortune itself, a source of mirth and pleasantry. Marshal de Broglie called so loudly for help that I was induced to hasten to his aid ; and this is the reason that Moravia must lie uncultivated till autumn. You ask me for what length of time have messieurs my comrades agreed to ruin the earth. To which I answer, I cannot tell : but that, at present, it is the fashion to make war ; and that probably this will long continue to be the fashion.

The abbé de Saint Pierre, who distinguishes me so far as to honour me with his correspondence, has sent me a most excellent treatise, on the means of restoring peace to all Europe, and on the manner of preserving it continually. The thing is exceedingly practicable ; nor is any thing, except the consent of all Europe, and some other such-like trifles, wanting for its accomplishment.

How much am I indebted to you, my dear Voltaire, for the very great pleasure which you

promise me, in giving me to hope that I shall soon receive the History of Louis XIV.! Accustomed as I am to this indulgence, I am avariciously desirous of your works. Do not disappoint me, dear Voltaire. I wish to learn them by rote; for, without you, there is no salvation in the heaven of literature.

You think perhaps I have not troubles enough, and that it was necessary to alarm me concerning your health. It is your duty to be more careful of yourself. Let me entreat you to recollect how much this subject interests me, and how entirely you ought to be attached to this world, of which you are the delight.

Rest assured that the life I lead has effected no change in my character, nor in my manner of thinking. I still love Remusberg, and tranquillity; but we are obliged to attend to our occupations in this world, and to make our duties our pleasures.

Peace being made, wife Maupertuis once more,
 Industrious Algarotti, and the lore
 By deep research and midnight labour brought,
 (A mass of wisdom, and a mine of thought !)
 Adding the Loves, the Graces, and the Wiles,
 Which ever wait on blooming Beauty's smiles;
 Adding the Arts, whose pleasures ne'er can cloy,
 These, and retreat, oh, how shall I enjoy !
 Yet these will all be joysless, should Voltaire
 Refuse the rich, the godlike feast to share.

Being

Being on the point of continuing my march,
I have not time to say more.

Adieu, dear Voltaire. Forget not the poor
Ixion, who is labouring like a miserable wretch
at the great wheel of politics ; but whose ad-
miration of you is equal to his affection.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CLXXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE,

April, 1742.

WHILE I was ill, your majesty per-
formed a greater number of fine actions than I
suffered fits of the fever. I cannot answer your
majesty's last favours. Where am I to address
my letter ; to Vienna, to Presburg, or to Temes-
war ? It is possible that you are in one of these
cities. And if there be any being who can be
in several places at once, it is certainly you ; as
being a king, consequently the image of the
Deity, and moreover a most thinking and active
image. In fine, sire, I have not written, because I
was in bed while your majesty was galloping
over the snow, in chafe of fame.

In

In that strange country, half interr'd,
 Where e'en your fame must ne'er be heard,
 I've lately been, or soon must be,
 As all our wisest quacks agree :
 A land where trav'lers never use
 To tell their lies, or tell their news ;
 A land to which you daily send
 The bodies both of foe and friend ;
 While souls of pandours, gruff and glum,
 To hell pack off by beat of drum ;
 A land which Christian, Turk, and Jew,
 Describe as if they really knew ;
 Whose limits learned doctors teach,
 Whenever learned doctors preach.

So will your Paris politician
 Sit, with satiric inquisition,
 On Frederic, Flanders, France, and Greece ;
 On Rome, and home, and war, and peace :
 Of all that 's bad, and all that 's good
 Will talk as if he understood ;
 So volubly his jargon vending,
 As he the world's rights were defending :
 With arms, alarms, and wise discourse,
 Was ne'er so stuff'd the Trojan horse.

I have only set one foot on the Stygian shore :
 but I was exceedingly sorry to see the numerous
 wretches that came there, to demand a passage ;
 some from Scharding, some from Prague, and
 others from Iglow ; while you, and the kings your
 comrades, never cease to ravage that earth which
 you say you have so great a desire to render hap-
 py.

py. Instead of that horrible war in which each of you must encounter misfortune, why do you not refer your differences to the abbé de Saint Pierre? He would settle them with as much ease as that with which Lycurgus divided the Lage-demonian lands; in which division we must acknowledge the portions were equal. He would establish the fifteen domains of Henry IV. But be it here observed that Henry IV. never dreamed of any such project. The secretaries of the duke de Sulli, who composed his Memoirs, have mentioned it; but the secretary of state, Villeroi, the minister for foreign affairs, has not. It is pleasant enough to see a project for overthrowing all the thrones of Europe attributed to Henry IV. before he scarcely was well seated on his own.

Till such time as the European diet shall assemble, in order to render all monarchs moderate and contented, your majesty commands me to send you what I have further written of the age of Louis XIV. Your majesty finds time to read when others cannot. I will accordingly send to Brussels for my papers, which shall be transcribed in obedience to your commands. Perhaps you will think I have not sufficiently limited my subject; but I labour chiefly for you, and have imagined the whole earth was
not

not too extensive. I shall therefore, sire, have the honour to send an enormous packet; which may probably arrive during the heat of battle, or be delivered to you in an entrenchment. I know not whether you are more happy amid all this tumult of glory than you were in the sweet solitude of Remusberg.—

But, be it so or be it not,
My friend can never be forgot:
I love you now as much as when,
Not first of kings, but first of men,
Reckless at Rheinsberg, there to fight
With error was your great delight.
In love with truth, you meaner things
To politicians left, and kings.

Accept, sire, with your usual goodness, my profound respect, with assurances of that veneration which never will end, and of that affection which will end only when you shall cease to love me.

L E T T E R CLXXV.

From M. de Voltaire.

Paris, May 15, 1742.

THOUGH erst your father could your body bind,
Still you yourself reign'd monarch of your mind :
A king in words, in truth you 're now a slave.
How many despots all your efforts brave !
Fame stands the first ; Remorse her pow'r arraigns ;
She points to vict'ry, you forget your chains.

Next Policy, less splendid, not less strong,
Infidious plods his crooked paths among ;
Now breaks a treaty, now a plot can smell ;
Asks at what market treach'ry best will sell ;
Sleepless at midnight, slumb'ring at noon-day,
He dreams he has to glory found the way.

Though rarely do they make one house their home,
Int'rest and Honesty perchance united come ;
Scarcely indeed can good be hop'd from those
Who, dang'rous friends, are always secret foes.
Inflicting by contention mutual pain,
The heart disputing, o'er the man they reign.

And now in crowds new plans and peril rise ;
Sings tumult in the ear, confusion blinds the eyes.
All must be pacified, all made agree ;
Some paid with reason, some with repartee ;
Some with a promise, others with a lye ;
For statesmen's tongue must never want reply.
Ah medley strange of virtue and of vice !
To live a hero, ah how great the price !

All this, sire, costs you nothing ; it is natural to you. You perform great and sage actions with the same facility as you compose music and poetry ; or as you write those letters which would give a wit of France a distinguished rank among wits, by whom he would be envied.

I conceive some hopes that your majesty, after having shaken Europe, will restore her to order ; and that my fellow mortals, after having admired, will bless you. Not that my hopes are entirely founded on the project which the abbé de Saint Pierre has sent your majesty *. I presume you discover things which the pacifier, who is not enough attended to in this world, wishes to discover ; and that the philosophic king is perfectly acquainted with what the philosopher, who is not a king, vainly endeavours to divine.

What gives me perfect security is some dozen cutters of capers, for whom your majesty has sent to France, and who are repairing to Prussia. Men seldom dance but when they are at peace. True it is that you have made some neighbouring powers pay the piper ; but this was both for the common and for your own indi-

* The abbé de Saint Pierre wrote many volumes on politics ; and often sent plans for a general pacification to the king of Prussia, and other princes. Cardinal du Bois called his works the dreams of a worthy man.

vidual good. You have re-established the dignity and prerogatives of the electors, you have suddenly become the arbitrator of Germany, and, after having made an emperor, you yourself want nothing but the title.

Add to this, you have one hundred and twenty thousand effective men, well armed, well clothed, well fed, and well affected. You have gained battles, and taken cities, at their head. It is for you, sire, to dance. Voiture would have told you, you have danced to some tune: but I am not so familiar as he was with great men and kings. It does not become me thus to trifle with them in proverbial wit.

Thus, sire, instead of twelve good academicians, you have twelve good dancers. The latter indeed are the most easily to be met with, and are the merriest. Academicians have sometimes been known to weary heroes who have been diverted by the actors of an opera.

This opera, with which your majesty is embellishing Berlin, does not prevent you from thinking of the belles-lettres. One art does no injury to another. Some minds have but a single passion; your soul includes them all; and, did God love men but a little, he would bestow this universality on every prince; that they might all

be able to discern, and to protect, good taste of every kind.

For this purpose, I imagine, kings were originally instituted.

I am acquainted with some tragic actors, who are not destitute of abilities, who might suit your majesty ; for I flatter myself you will not confine your views to Italian nonsense, and French gambado. A hero is always pleased with the theatre on which heroes are represented.

May you, sire, soon enjoy every species of pleasure, like as you have acquired every species of glory ! Such is the sincere wish of your majesty's admirer ; your subject in his heart, though unfortunately he does not live in your kingdom ; whose mind is penetrated by the grandeur of yours, and whose affections are interested as much in your happiness as you yourself are.

Accept, sire, with your usual goodness, my most profound respects.

L E T T E R CLXXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

Paris, May 26, 1742.

WISE Solomon, and valiant Philip's son,
 Henceforth give place ; from both the laurel's won.
 The hero comes ; earth's idol, Austria's scourge !
 Lo ! rays of terror round his head diverge !
 By him be taught, as sages were before ;
 Learn, warrior, learn on Virt'ry's wing to soar.

Yet thund'ring heroes little do I love :
 I conq'rors hate, nor conquest can approve :
 Yes, conq'rors hate ; foes of themselves, and peace,
 Who would the woes of wretchedness increase !
 In search of Death who stalk the bloody field,
 Inflicting horror where they ought to shield !
 Gore, carnage, writhes, and groans, and pangs, their joy ;
 Themselves but men, mankind they would destroy.

Of heroes first, how much you merit hate !
 But ah ! To love you ever is my fate ;
 What though the young, the useful, and the brave,
 Fall'n by your hand, find an untimely grave !

Your reason curses your ambitious rage ;
 For, though a hero, still are you a sage.

While you on murd'rous cannon tiptoe stand,
 Confronting Danger, issuing Death's command ;
 While red the waters stream that course the plain,
 Destruction thrives, and slain are heap'd on slain :
 Let some remorse but in your bosom live ;
 Weep o'er your victories, and I forgive.

Q 2

I love

I love humanity, sir, even more than I love you. But after having, with the abbé de Saint Pierre, wept for the human race, of which you are become the terror, I yield to all the joy which your acquired fame inspires. This fame would be complete, should your majesty compel the queen of Hungary to accept peace, and the Germans to be happy. You are now the hero of Germany, and the arbitrator of Europe ; the pacificator you shall be, and our opera prologues* shall hereafter be all addressed to you.

Fortune, which sports with mankind, but which you seem to have enslaved, most whimsically arranges the affairs of this world. I well knew you would perform great actions, and was certain of the approach of the fine age to which you were to give birth : but I never suspected, when the count du Four† went to visit marshal de Broglie, with whom he was not too well satisfied, that this count du Four would one day have the goodness to march, with a triumphant army, to the aid of the marshal, and bring him deliverance by a victory. Your majesty has not hitherto deigned to inform the world of the details of that day. I imagine you have had some-

* Famous for their flattery. T.

† The name which the king of Prussia had assumed when he travelled incognito. T.

thing

thing better to do than to write narratives ; but your modesty is betrayed by certain ocular witnesses, who affirm that the battle was gained entirely by the excess of courage, and the great prudence, which you displayed. They add that my hero still has a feeling heart ; and that the man who has occasioned the death of so many men is seated by the sick bed of count von Rottemburg. These are things of which you do not inform me ; yet which you may venture to avow, as being natural to you.

Go on, sire ; but let it be to make as many men happy in this world as you have deprived it of. Oh may my Alexander again become Solomon as soon as possible ; that he may deign occasionally to recollect his former admirer, who is in heart his subject, and who would come to pass his life at his feet, were he not detained by friendship, which is more powerful than kings and heroes ! He still will ever remain attached to your majesty, with the most profound respect, and the most tender veneration.

LETTER CLXXVII.

From the King.

The camp of Kuttemberg, June 1, 1742.

THE palm of peace to dread alarm gives respite ;
 In olive groves we smiling pile our arms.
 No more is heard the sanguinary sound
 Of timbal, clarion shrill, or shouting foe.
 Those fields which late, by rage, with blood of man,
 Carnage, and death were fullied, soon shall laugh,
 With corn, and wine, and oil abundant crown'd.
 The warrior brave, whose tyrant's int'rest vile
 Him enemies uprais'd, or seeming such,
 Shall with the warrior live in brotherhood ;
 Performing gentle acts of courtesy
 To him against whose life, but yesterday,
 In rage he rear'd his hand. Death hears ! Again
 The brand of discord, vainly seizing, shakes ;
 And, there to wait new crimes, once more th' abhorrent
 Spectre plunges down to his native hell !

Come then, oh Peace ! With garlands never fading
 Come, prodigal in charms, with blessings stor'd,
 To heal earth's wounds, and dry her scalding tears !
 Ah ! World accur'd ! Infatuated man !
 Not even thou, oh Peace ! All lovely as thou art !
 In good exhaustless ! No, till thou hast chas'd
 The monsters Avarice and Ambition hence
 (Dread warfare for a form so soft and fair !)
 Not thou canst fix on earth thy sure abode ! *

* These verses were likewise sent to M. Jordan. See vol. ix. p. 264. T.

After

After having made my peace with my foes, I hope I may in turn make my peace with you. As a firm token of this, on your part, I ask the age of Louis XIV. I send you the relation of the last battle, which I wrote myself, according to your request.

I cannot yet entertain you with any thing but marches, disgraceful retreats, pursuits, cowardice, and all sorts of accidents ; which, though they relate to the most grave matters, are not the less ridiculous.

Rottemburg begins to recover his health, and is entirely out of danger. Do not think me cruel, but reasonable enough not to choose an evil, except when a greater evil is thus to be avoided. Any man, who has courage enough to have a carious tooth drawn, will fight a battle to put an end to a war. To shed blood, under such circumstances, is to be sparing of it : it is to bleed an enemy in his delirium, by this means to bring him to his senses.

Adieu, my dear Voltaire. Fail not continually to believe, till I shall tell you the contrary, that I shall all my life esteem and love you.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CLXXVIII.

From the King.

The camp of Kuttemberg, June 20, 1742.

RETURN'D at length, friend Borck relates
How Emily still captivates
Your languid body by her charms,
And locks you in her loving arms.

But oh ! I'm pleas'd to hear that still,
Though weak your frame, you've wit at will ;
Wit, too, whose keen and splendid rays,
Through ev'ry clime mankind amaze ;
And that from Paris, where they first dilate,
To regions dull as these they penetrate !

You've heard how Broglio lately lost,
Not breeches old of little cost*—
He lost, by having turn'd his breech,
Without a battle or a speech,
His honour, on his flight to Prague ;
From pandour scamp'ring as from plague.
Young Louis, far from stern rebuke,
For this has made the man a duke.
I should have wonder'd less had he
Promoted been by th' enemy.

The life we lead is different enough from that
led at Versailles ; and still more so from that we
led at Remusberg. To-day an ambassador
arrived, to make propositions to me. Yesterday

* See vol. ix. p. 234. T.

an ambassador of smoke* departed; and to-morrow a third will make his appearance, bearing Galbanum.

Yesterday morning some forty Talpash prisoners were brought in, who are very handsome fellows. Our hussars are at present coursing the country to bring in peasants, waggons, and provisions. We are transporting our sick and wounded toward that country into which we soon shall follow.

May you enjoy an uninterrupted, firm, and vigorous state of health! May you, more a philosopher than you at present are, prefer the solitude of Charlottenburg to the charming palace of Armida which you inhabit! May you be the happiest of mortals, as you are the most amiable! Such are the heart-felt wishes of your old friend.

Adieu.

F R E D E R I C.

* *Un chargé de fumée.*

LETTER CLXXIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

Paris, June, 1742.

THIS city's yours, or so should seem;
 For here are you the general theme.
 In cowl or cloak, long robe, cut skirt,
 Wit, fool, and pedant, fop and flirt,
 Both night and morn, and morn and night,
 Of you to talk in crowds unite.
 In house or alley, square or street,
 I'm ask'd, by ev'ry soul I meet,
 At ev'ry window, ev'ry door,
 To tell them all I know, and more.

" Oh ! Ay ! You've seen him ! Hey ? Yes—well,
 " A prodigy ! A— ! Nay, now—tell—
 " Ay tell us—Is he politician,
 " Poet, warrior, and musician?
 " 'Tis said, but sure that's idle prattle,
 " He verses writes on day of battle !
 " And can he have so good a heart ?
 " Such virtues too, yet so much art ?
 " Turenne, Gustavus, in the field,
 " Were they alive, to him must yield ?
 " In private? Ay—what is he then ?
 " Rumour declares the first of men !
 " At supper were he here, between us,
 " Catullus, Horace, and Mecænas,
 " With all their breeding, ease, and wit,
 " We should suppose in him were met !!"

In daily papers deeply read,
 A surly grey-beard turns his head—

" We're

“ We’re told with Austria now he treats :
 “ Is ’t thus his former friends be cheats?”
 • Pshaw!” answers one, “ that’s all mistake ;
 • I’m sure he ne’er will France forfaze.”

A young coquette the next declares
 For constancy she little cares—

“ Pray what to me are plot and plan ?
 “ I hear he is a charming man !”

* * * * * * * * *
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Half melancholy, half grimace,
 Thiriot demands, with long-drawn face ;
 Pray don’t, sometimes, these warlike sages
 Forget to pay their servants wages ?
 Have no such doubt, my friend, said I ;
 Much rather hope a large supply.
 I know my hero’s noble mind ;
 I know his heart, how good and kind ;
 How well he keeps his word I know ;
 For when he promis’d, long ago,
 When pleasure threw out ev’ry lure
 That might a youthful prince secure,
 How great he’d be, I then believ’d ;
 Nor can you say I’ve been deceiv’d.

Thus do all I hear, when speaking of your
 majesty, alleviate my chagrin at not being with
 you. But is it decreed that you, sire, must be
 everlastingly taking towns, and that I must as
 eternally be at law ? Will there be no happy days

this summer, on which I may pay my court to your majesty? &c.

LETTER CLXXX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE,

July, 1742.

I HAVE received verses, and exceedingly good verses, from my adorable king, at a time when we supposed your majesty was wholly intent on delivering marshal de Broglie, your old Strasburg friend, from his troubles. The agreeable word *peace*, a word so sweet to my ear, has glided into your majesty's letter. I here send you an Ode, which I scribbled against you kings, who at that time seemed intent on the destruction of my fellow mortals. The lord of nations, Frederic the Great, has heard my prayers; and, be my Ode * good or ill, scarcely was it written before I heard that your majesty had made an excellent treaty—excellent for yourself, beyond all doubt; for you have formed your virtuous mind to the grand scale of politics: but that this treaty will be found excellent for us Frenchmen, is a thing doubted of at Paris. One half of the babblers loudly assert that you

* Ode to the Queen of Hungary.

have

have abandoned us to the mercy of the god of arms ; the other half are equally clamorous, yet know not what about. Some few abbés de Saint Pierre bless you, amid the tumult ; one of which philosophic number am I. You, as I suppose, will compel all the belligerent powers to make peace ; and the hero of the age will be the pacificator of Germany, and of Europe. I imagine you have anticipated the venerable sage, on whom the fates have bestowed that length of life which the fortunate Nestor enjoyed *. Achilles has outwitted Nestor. Happy wisdom, should it but contribute to the felicity of the world !

The time is now come in which your majesty may amuse your great soul, composed as it is of so many apparently incompatible qualities. Be assured, sire, that in less than a month I will myself go to Brussels for the papers which you deigned to desire to see, or will send for them hither. There are small things which a man of small means cannot perform without difficulty ; while Frederic the Great accomplishes others the most vast in a moment.

You no longer, sire, are our ally ; but you are the ally of the human race. You wish that each man should peaceably enjoy the inheritance of his fathers, free and undisturbed. This would be the philosopher's stone of politics, and ought

* The cardinal de Fleuri, as I suppose. T.

to be the produce of your laboratory. Say but, "It is my will that men should be happy," and happy they will be. Procure good actors for your opera, and your theatre; and may I be a witness, at Berlin, of your pleasures and your fame!

LETTER CLXXXI.

From M. de Voltaire.

July, 1742.

OH most extraordinary of men! You who win battles, conquer provinces, make peace, and write music and poetry with so much gaiety and expedition——

Achilles' lyre is yours; 'tis yours to sing
Your own immortal deeds. My barren muse
Deep silence best befits, and reverent awe.
King of the wise, and wisest among kings,
Whose arm in terror taught old earth to tremble,
Shower thy blessings down; her fears remove;
And, having ceased to thunder, smile in peace!

Thus Isr'el's king, a shepherd, soldier, poet,
Than you less tuneful, warlike, less belov'd,
From conquest came, his harp sonorous seiz'd,
And sooth'd the phrenzy of the wretched Saul.

With sounds more sweet oh soothe surrounding kings!
May barb'rous Ate, fierce and cruel Rage,
Hatred and her fell brood, and Discord dire,

Henceforth,

Henceforth, enchain'd by your triumphant arms,
Be patient doom'd to hear th' enchanting song !
Oh may they feel their mutual fury cease !
May Horror hear, and into mildness change !
May Heav'n applaud, and echoing Earth declare
Wide-spreading lasting peace she owes to you !

I have continually hoped for this universal peace, as though I had been a bastard of the abbé de Saint Pierre. To make peace solely for himself, would be the act of a king who should love his own power and states only ; and this does not agree with the opinions of us philosophers, who hold it good to love the whole human race. The abbé de Saint Pierre would tell your majesty that, to gain Paradise, it were as necessary to do good to the Chinese as to the people of Brandenburg and Silesia.

The relation of your battle of Chotfitz *, which you have had the goodness to send me, proves that you can handle the pen as well as the sword. I there perceive, as well as a poor petty philosopher can perceive, the genius of a great general appearing under the veil of modesty. Such simplicity is much more heroic than the pompous inscriptions which formerly were too splendidly diffused throughout the galleries of Versailles, and which Louis XIV. effaced by

* Chotfitz or Czallaw.

T.

the

the advice of Boileau. Praise is only to be obtained by deeds. This trifling anecdote may serve to increase your esteem for Louis XIV *.

I hope, sire, soon to see your gallery of Charlottenburg; I hope again to enjoy the happiness of beholding the conquering king, the pacific monarch, the lover of men, who so early has performed so many prodigies. I shall probably be at Brussels next month, from which place, I flatter myself, I shall have the honour to go and pass some ten or twelve days with my adorable monarch. But who can speak of Chotfis in verse? What a name it is! Chotfis! Are not you ashamed, sire, of having gained the battle of Chotfis; to which no word will rhyme, and the very sound of which flays the ear? No matter; I wish to pass my life with the conqueror of Chotfis!

Reproach me not, nor think that I
The glorious victor wish to fly;
Or that, by Cupid's arts betray'd,
I shun renown, and seek the shade.
Say not Armida sways my soul,
I've tasted no enchanted bowl;
My palace is, instead of Guilt,
By Friendship and by Virtue built.

* There were some very pompous inscriptions remaining, till the regent duke of Orleans caused such of them to be effaced as might offend the neighbouring nations.

'Yes,

Yes, sire, setting heroism, victories, and circumstances which impose such profound respect aside, I take the liberty, as you well know, to love you most affectionately. But I should be unworthy to love you so well, or to be beloved by your majesty, were I, for the greatest man of his age, to forsake another great man ; who it is true wears petticoats, but whose mind is as masculine as yours ; and who, by courageous and unshaken friendship, has made it my duty, for these ten years, not to be guilty of such treachery.

I will repair to sacrifice in your temple, and shall afterward return to her altars.

From heav'n of friendship let me rove
 Back to the genial orb of love ;
 Repell'd, attracted, here and there,
 These mutual blessings let me share !

I will begin to send your majesty some of the papers you demand, and the rest shall be sent when I am at Brussels.

Of Charles the friend, why not the friend of France ?
 Why not the gen'ral friend of earth and men ?
 Or wherefore only virtuous be by halves ?

God and Lucifer only know what is become of the letter which I wrote to your majesty, on this fine subject, about the end of the month of June; or by what means it has fallen into other

hands. I am doomed to remain ignorant of the game. I have been played one of the most illustrious tricks possible ; but I am such an excellent cosmopolite that I rejoice at all things.

LETTER CLXXXII.

From the King.

MY DEAR VOLTAIRE, Potsdam, July 25, 1742.

I PAY you in the coin of great lords ; that is, I return you a very bad ode for the good one which you sent me ; and moreover condemn you to correct it, and to render it better. I believe it to be the first ode that ever was written, in which politics played so conspicuous a part. But for this you may thank yourself, for you have excited me to defend my cause. I have, in effect, discovered that the language of the gods is that of justice and of innocence, which will always give worth to a few lines of poetry, even though an Alexandrine verse should not happen to be so harmonious as might be wished.

The queen of Hungary is very fortunate, in having an attorney who so well understands the art of language, and its seductive charms, as you do. I think myself happy that our disputes are

not

not to be determined by a law-suit ; for, judging from your inclination to favour that queen, and from your talents, I never could withstand Venus and Apollo united.

You declaim, with great ease, against those who support their rights and pretensions with the sword ; but I recollect the time when, had an army been at your command, it would most indubitably have marched against Desfontaines, Rousseau, Vanduren, &c. &c. Till the Platonic arbitration of the abbé de Saint Pierre shall take place, kings will find no other resources to terminate their disputes than those of acts of hostility ; by which they may wrest such just satisfaction, from their adversaries, as they never would have obtained by any other expedient. The misfortunes and calamities which follow are but the maladies of the human body. The last war, therefore, ought to be considered as a fever fit which had affected Europe, and which almost immediately took its leave.

I concern myself very little with the rumours of your Parisians ; they are gnats that continually buzz. Their lampoons resemble the foul language of parrots ; and their sentences are as grave as would be the decisions of a baboon on metaphysical subjects. Would you have me be angry because the relations of the great Broglie

are offended that I did not repair the blunders committed by this wonderful man? I do not pique myself on Don-Quixotism; and, far from wishing to repair the errors of others, I do but endeavour to repair my own, if so I can.

Though all France should condemn me for having made peace, never will the philosopher Voltaire be borne away by the tide of numbers. It is a general rule, that we ought not to keep our engagements longer than our forces will permit. We made an alliance, as people make marriage contracts. I promised to go to war, as the bridegroom promises to satisfy the concupiscence of the bride; but as, in marriage, the desires of the woman often exhaust the powers of the man, so in war the weakness of allies becomes burthensome to an individual, and renders the load insupportable. In fine, to end the comparison, when a husband imagines he has sufficient proofs of the gallantry of his wife, nothing should prevent him from suing for a divorce.

I make no application of this part of my simile; you are sufficiently informed, and sufficiently a politician, to make it for yourself.

Let me beg you to send me, as soon as possible, all the charming verses which you wrote during your abode at Paris. I envy the whole earth your company, and wish you were at the
only

only place where you are not, that I might reiterate how much I esteem and love you. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CLXXXIII.

From the King.

MY DEAR VOLTAIRE,

Potsdam,
April 7, 1742.

YOU poetically say so many fine things to me, that, were I to believe you, my brain would be turned. A truce, I beg, to the high-sounding words of *hero* and *heroism*; which, since the return of peace, are only proper to fill up the hemistich of a tragic verse.

How freely flows the charming line,
Your muse how sportive, how divine,
When she, instead of praise unfit,
Plays round the lambent flame of wit!
But fulsome flatt'ry, when too cheap,
Might set the gods themselves to sleep.

These brilliant fallies of your imagination never charm more than in sportive subjects. Every man has not the gift of inciting the smile of the mind. Native mirth is necessary to communicate mirth to others.

R 3

Neither

Neither God nor Lucifer, but a wretched post-office clerk at Brussels, it was, who opened and copied your letter, which he sent to Paris, and made it public. I do not believe your old Nestor is entirely spotless in this affair.

Let me entreat you, my dear Voltaire, to make restitution of a syllable to the village of Chotusitz, which you have so inhumanly torn from it; and, since it is necessary that the field of battle should have a rhyme, I venture to observe to you that Chotusitz rhimes tolerably well with Molvitz. Thus have I paid you both with rhyme and reason.

You reply in form, because I have supposed you have a passion for the marchioness du Chatelet; and I think I deserve your thanks for having presumed so well of you. The marchioness is handsome and lovely; you possess sensibility, she has a heart; you have feeling, she is not marble; and you have lived together these ten years. Would you make me believe that, during this long period, you never talked of any thing but philosophy to the most amiable woman in France? Had it been so, no offence to you, my dear friend, you would have acted a very insignificant part. I did not imagine the pleasures were banished the temple of Virtue which you inhabit.

You

You have however promised to sacrifice a few days to me, which is all I ask. The more painful I shall suppose your absence from the mar-chioness to be, the greater ought to be my gratitude. Beware how you deceive me--

How many charming things I hear,
In fancy feated by your side!
The flow of wisdom and th' escapes of wit--
These all in sport, and that in manly pride,
Spontaneous catch the raptur'd ear!
How happy, à-propos, and fit
Each sentence! How concise!
'Tis Juvenal, who strikes at vice;
And, dancing now the table round,
Anacreon comes, his brows with roses bound;
The courtly Horace hears,
And straight appears;
Horace the nice, the playful, yet profound;
Nor least of all this splendid train,
Saunt'ring enters La Fontaine,
The simple and the sweet;
Little less see him take his seat,
And soon begin his hearers to regale;
Nature fails not to be near,
But all in ecstasy writes comments on the tale.

With these, your chosen friends,
Oh come, and with us live!
Such nectar as we have we 'll give;
Come and correct our loud and boist'reous mirth,
Reform whate'er offends;
To pleasures dignified, and taste, and grace, give birth.

Adieu, my dear Voltaire. Be just to your friends : worship at the altars of madame du Chatelet ; but, during your intercourse with the gods, forget not the men who love you, and on them bestow a few of your moments.

FREDERIC,

L E T T E R CLXXXIV.

From the King.

Aix-la-Chapelle, August 26, 1742.

FROM the fountain at which, as the faculty say,
Gout, Colic, and Gravel take horse and away ;
The fountain where Luxury parts with his wealth,
In hopes there to purchase Good Humour and Health ;

From the place to which so many people resort for their diversion, and from which so many return without being cured ; where the quackery of physicians, and love intrigues, keep equal pace ; and to which, in fine, infirmity and prejudice lead so many people from all parts of the world — dating from this fountain, thither do I invite you, as an old valetudinarian, to come and meet me ; and, as valetudinarian and wit united, precedence shall be yours.

We arrived here yesterday. I believe you

to

to be now at Brussels; and I likewise believe that the day after to-morrow you will be here. Let me beg you to bring me your Mahomet, as it was played at Paris; and to collect all you have written of the Age of Louis XIV. for my amusement and instruction. You will be received with all the ardor of impatience, and all the eagerness of esteem. *Vale.*

F R E D E R I C,

L E T T E R CLXXXV.

From M. de Voltaire.

August 29, 1742,

HOW glorious has been your campaign!

Your song, ah how tuneful and sweet!

Apollo! Say where do you reign?

My deity where may I meet?

Leaving Folly unheeded to sport,

And Vice her false hopes to detect,

Where old Charlemagne held his court,

On his projects you deeply reflect.

Let my hero, let my king, suffer an abominable cold, which seized me on the road from Lille to Brussels, to be somewhat diminished, before I fly to Aix-la-Chapelle. This cold has made me deaf, which it is wrong to be in your majesty's

majesty's company : as well might we be impotent in the company of the woman we love. During the two or three days that I am condemned to remain in my bed, I will cause Mahomet to be transcribed as it was played, and as it gave pleasure to philosophers, and disgust to the devout. It is a repetition of what happened to Tartuffe. The hypocrites persecuted Moliere, and the fanatics have risen in arms against me. I yielded to the torrent without answering a word. Had Socrates done the same, he would not have swallowed hemlock.

I own I know nothing so disgraceful to my country as that infamous oppression which is the dishonour of human nature. Let me have the king of Prussia for my sovereign, and the English for my fellow-citizens. Our Frenchmen, in general, are no more than grown children. But to this point I continually return : the real thinking beings among us, though their number be small, think excellently ; and for their sake we ought to pardon the rest.

With respect to my historic prattle, a first cargo departed on the twentieth of this month from Paris, addressed to the confidential David Gerrard; and a second is ready. I ask your majesty's pardon for the trouble you will find in decyphering the writing of the different persons

fans who have hastily copied what I have collected,

I suppose the packet is at present on the road, to come and weary your majesty at Aix la Chappelle.

If men may be allowed to use the word *certainly*, I certainly know that it was not a clerk, at Brussels, who opened the letter which is become my Pandora's box. This fine exploit was performed at Paris, at a critical moment, and by a spy of the person whom your majesty suspected.

Well did your majesty divine. You are as conversant with small things as with great.

You are particularly well acquainted with the injustice committed by those men who take upon themselves to pass sentence on kings; and your truly original Ode on that subject abounds in poetry, and sublime philosophy.

Would to God your majesty had equal reason, relative to the fine compliments which you have paid me, in your last letter but one, concerning the marchioness—

Indeed your majesty is much too kind.

What, J!

By nature form'd for feats of love!

I!—This I deny.

I own she kindly gave a heart,
And taught me wit and beauty to adore;
But nothing more.

All you suppose why did she not impart ?
 Why am I doom'd to prove
 Such things exist but in my monarch's mind ?
 Perhaps indeed there was a time—
 Alas ! 'Tis o'er—
 Smiling Youth has ta'en his flight ;
 And now ?—Oblivion !—Night !—
 Too sure, alas ! I 'm past my prime.
 To poets in their spring such gifts impute ;
 To Gresset the renown'd :
 Invite him where the laurel grows ;
 Shew him the myrtle and the rose ;
 With these, in fragrant garland twin'd, let him be crown'd.
 Behold him mute !
 He answers not the friendly call,
 Neglects the banquets of the splendid hall
 For Picardy, and prostitute ;
 These he adores,
 Or nightly o'er his tragic offspring pores.

LETTER CLXXXVI.

*From the King.**Fredericus Virgilio, Salutation,*Aix la Chapelle,
Sept. 1, 1742.

HERE am I, in the metropolis of Charlemagne and the valetudinarians. A letter has been sent me from Paris, which is attributed to you ; and which, be the author who he may, deserves to have been written by Voltaire. It has

has been my consolation in a country where there is little society, where men drink the waters of the Styx, and in which the empyricism of physicians extends its power even over the mind. I wish the French all thought like the author of this letter; and that, less partial in their phrenzy, they might become more just toward foreigners. I wish, in fine, that you had written the letter, and that you had sent it me.

But what need have I of your letters? The author is in the neighbourhood. Come but here, and you need not doubt but that I shall infinitely prefer the pleasure of listening to what you say, to that of reading what you write. I hope you will have the politeness to do me this favour; and at the same time to bring me Mahomet, proscribed as he is by bigots, and sought after by the philosophers of Berlin.

I attempt not to say more, for I hope you will come here, that you may listen to all which my esteem has to utter.

Adieu.

FREDERIC.

L E T .

LETTER CLXXXVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

September 2, 1742.

TRUMPETS, drums, and thunder sleep ;
 Them and your well-tried arguments you keep
 Stor'd up in arsenal and magazine.

By well-tim'd arguments I mean
 Great guns, some twenty thousand. Know,
 This logic, fire, gives me the vapours :
 I love your suppers, op'ras, balls, and belles ;
 Or, while the loud orchestra swells,
 Give me French rigadoons, Italian capers.
 Nay, I'd prefer a puppet-show,
 To all your hero-butchers and battalions.

When shall my ravish'd eyes
 View Pleasure's stately palace rise,
 At your command ?
 With shining columns, all of gold,
 And roof star-spangled, wond'rous to behold !

Ah wave the magic wand !
 With animated marble and medallions,
 Of Polignac the prize,
 The beauties of th' antique,
 Roman and Greek,
 Embellish your domain.

Thus ! Thus immortalize your reign !
 Methinks I hear the very marble speak.
 " Effigies are we of all the great and wise,
 " Why leave us here at Rome,
 " Where virtue buried lies,

" Mong

" 'Mong friars white, and black, and grey?
 " Here, where the sorrowing Arts ne'er see the light of
 " day!
 " At Rome?—Rome now the sanctified,
 " Where tonsur'd harlequins, and mitred pride,
 " And coward signiors stalk
 " The rounds that ancient heroes us'd to walk?
 " Their manes take offence!
 " Remove us hence,
 " And make thy splendid residence our future home."

The statues of the cardinal de Polignac no doubt, fire, often repeat these things to you. But I have now to make another beauty speak; and not a marble beauty, but one who is well worth all your statues—

I've seen two beauteous eyes in tears,
 That spoke their sorrows, hopes, and fears,
 As if of sorrow they were proud:
 They spoke with eloquence divine;
 All felt their pow'r that saw them shine;
 So bright were they behind their cloud.

These eyes, fire, and the charming countenance which they irradiate, are the property of madame Walstein, or Wallenstein; one of the grand nieces of the famous duke of Walstein, whom the emperor Ferdinand so very decently caused to be murdered, as he was jumping from his bed, by four honest Irishmen; which act he certainly would

would not have done, had he seen the grand
niece of the duke.

I ask'd why eyes so bright should weep ;
Requested she her griefs would name.
She answer'd, with a sigh so deep,
“ He, whom you love, your king 's to blame !”

Kings, I own, are sometimes guilty of such
faults ; they make even fine eyes weep : not to
mention a multitude of others, who have no
pretensions to beauty—

Their very love, their want of faith,
Their furious rage, their fell ambition,
In Germany, as well as France,
Have brought full many to contrition.

At length I understood the cause of her
grief to be, that count von Furstemberg is con-
demned, by your majesty's orders, to remain in
indolence, imprisoned at Wesel. She asked me
what she must do to relieve him. To this I re-
plied there were two remedies : the first was, to
assemble an army of a hundred thousand men,
and to besiege the town ; and the second to
petition your majesty, which last was incom-
parably the most certain.

Then, riding in the clouds, I saw
The king that gives to others law ;

?Twas

"Twas Love ; with Walstein's pray'r he wing'd his way :
 And as he flew aloud he spoke—
 " My will is, which let none revoke,
 " When Beauty pleads that monarchs should obey."

L E T T E R CLXXXVIII.

From the King.

Aix-la-Chapelle, September 2, 1742.

YOURSSELF excepted, I know nothing so excellent as your letters. The last is as charming as all the others which you write to me. Yet it would have given me more pleasure, had you followed it more expeditiously ; for at present I believe I shall be deprived of the pleasure of seeing you. I depart on the 7th for Silesia.

This is the most stupid country I know ; the physicians, in order to reduce strangers to the standard of their townsmen, require them not to think. They pretend that no man ought to have common sense ; and that the care of health ought to preclude every other care..

Messieurs Chapel and Cotzviler absolutely forbid any man to write poetry ; they affirm it is treason against the faculty ; and that it is impossible to drink of the streams of Hippocrene and the muddy waters of the petty empire of Aix at

the same time. I am obliged to cede to their will ; but God knows what is the degree of satisfaction which I shall take, when I am once again at home. I have neither received large nor small packet from you ; and suppose that the prudent David Gerrard has carefully locked it up, at Berlin, till my arrival. Be assured I will write myself creditor for all you send me ; and that you, by your works, are the great consolation of my life.

Adieu, my dear Voltaire. To you I commit the provision of food for my mind. Send me occasionally those nutritious viands which impart strength ; and at other times those exquisite meats, the delightful flavour of which flatters the taste, and excites the appetite.

Be persuaded of the esteem, the friendship, and all the distinguished sentiments I have for you.

FREDERIC.

L E T-

L E T T E R CLXXXIX.

From the King.

Remusberg, October 13, 1742.

I WAS occupied in reading your impartial and well-considered History, which is not encumbered by useless minutiae, at the very moment I received your letter. The first wish I conceived was that I might receive the remainder. The little I have read inspires a wish to have more. None of the writings of the ancients are so capable as this work is to inspire just ideas, to form the taste, and to soften and polish the manners *. It will become the ornament of our age, and a monument which will attest to posterity the superiority of the genius of the moderns over that of the ancients. Cicero said he could not conceive how the Augurs could possibly forbear to laugh, when they looked in each others faces. You go further; you display the ridiculous and the mad proceedings of the Clergy.

The age in which we live furnishes examples

* The Basil edition says, the work here praised was the *Essai sur les Mœurs et l'Esprit des Nations*: or, *An Essay on the Manners and Genius of Nations.* T.

of ambition, courage, &c. ; but, to its honour, I dare affirm, it cannot be reproached with any of those cruel and barbarous acts which have been the disgrace of preceding times.

It has less dishonesty, less fanaticism ; more humanity, and more politeness.

Since the Pharsalian war, never were interests more important discussed than have been in the present conflict. The pre-eminence of the two most powerful families of Christendom is contested, and the ruin of the one or of the other. These are great events, which merit to be regarded by you, and to find their place in the continuation of the History which you propose to write.

Ah ! This world's woes how much do I lament !
Lament the ties which Discord could dissolve !
But Janus' temple once again is clos'd :
There have the Prussian eagles stor'd their thunder.
My valiant warriors do not, friend, insult ;
They nobly brav'd the storm ; they nothing ask'd ;
Their motive vict'ry and the love of fame,
Glory unint'rested was their reward.
Repose is now their due. Beneath their laurels
Let th' Arts and Pleasures straight their temple build,
And this let Germany astonish'd view.

The pleasures of this temple you enjoy whenever you please ; and hence we mortals gain instruction and delight.

I every

I every day expect to receive the beautiful collection of antiquities of the abbé de Polignac,

Who formerly from Rome did them purloin;
And we from France have filch'd them in return,
Much to the marvel of the world, I ween.

I have admired the Epistle Dedicatory to Mahomet, which is full of true reflections, and witty lines.

Who like bigots can provoke
Reason's scorn, and Satire's stroke?
Knaves, and fools, and holy cheats,
Highway virgins, saints in streets,
Waxlights, relics, genuflection,
Limbo, pardons, grace, election,
Mummuries more than I can mention,
Lyes that might defy invention,
Wafers, transubstantiation,
Bulls and excommunication,
Pilgrim beggars in procession,
Falsehood trembling at confession,
Folly laugh'd at while milled,
Masses drawling for the dead,
Scoundrels canoniz'd when rotten,
Luft and av'rice ne'er forgotten,
Nuns and friars at midnight orgies,
Nephews, Popes, and Cæsar Borgias—
Full of mischief, rank abuse,
Picture like to this produce,
No false colouring, no lampoon,
And I'll a nail drive thro' the moon.

I am not acquainted with madame von Wallenstein; but I very well know that her said nephew has behaved exceedingly ill to his superiors; and that, right or wrong, he was determined to fight.

Write poetry and history eternally, my dear Voltaire; for you will never satiate the hunger with which I devour your works, nor ever dry up the source of my gratitude.

Adieu.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CXC.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

Brussels, November, 1742.

I AM very happy to find that the most sage of monarchs is somewhat satisfied with the ample picture which I have drawn of the follies of mankind. Well may your majesty say the age in which we live has great advantages over times of such darkness and cruelty; and that it is better, accursed blasphemy as it may be deemed, to live at present than to have existed formerly.

Would to God that all princes had thought like

like my hero ! There would then have been no religious wars ; no faggots kindled to burn the poor devils who maintained that God was inclosed within a morsel of bread, in a manner different to what was supposed by Saint Thomas.

A casuist examines whether the Virgin received any pleasure from the compression and obumbration of the Holy Ghost. . He is for the affirmative, and supports his opinion with very strong arguments. Very fine folios are written to disprove the supposition ; but no man is burnt, nor are any cities destroyed, in the dispute. Had the partisans of Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, and the Popes, acted in the same manner, there would have been some pleasure in living with such people.

There are few quarrels between fanatics at present, except in France, where fanaticism and molinism maintain a discordancy which may become serious, because such chimeras are there seriously treated.

Let but the prince laugh, and the people will join in the ridicule. But kings who keep confessors seldom are philosophers.

I send your majesty a small cargo of human absurdities, which will serve as new proofs of the great superiority of the age of Frederic over the ages of so many past emperors. But all these

proofs, fire, are inferior to those which you afford.

I have heard that, though a general of an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men, your majesty is sitting, in great tranquillity, a spectator of comedies in your palace. The company that plays before you probably does not resemble your warlike companies; it is not, I believe, the first in Europe.

I think I have discovered a young man of wit and merit, who writes very pleasing poetry, and who would be very capable of aiding my hero in his pleasures, of superintending his comedians, and of amusing him who holds the balance among the monarchs of this world. I believe I shall be at Paris in a fortnight, and I will then send more positive information to your majesty.

I hope also to send you two or three additional ages; but I want as many books as you have soldiers, and I can only find those immense collections, from which I extract some drops of elixir, at Paris.

I flatter myself that your majesty is in the present enjoyment of the beautiful collection of cardinal de Polignac—

For twenty thousand crowns, king, great of thought!
Th' antiques of Roman Marius hast thou bought,

But

But what the Romans valued most of yore,
 Virtues, alas ! now brought from Rome no more,
 Virtues which human nature make divine,
 Native to thee, unpurchas'd, these are thine.

I have just seen the Hanoverians and Hessians drawn up in order of battle. They are fine men, but are not equal to your majesty's troops ; nor are they headed by my hero. It is not supposed that they will this winter leave their garrison. They are said to be going to Dunkirk ; but the road to that place is somewhat rugged, notwithstanding its smooth appearance.

May your majesty preserve your usual kindness for your eternal admirer !

L E T T E R CXCI.

From the King.

1742.

WERE the histories of the world all written like that which you have confided to me, we should be better informed than we are, of all ages, and less deceived by historians. The more I am acquainted with you, the more do I find you to be a very singular man. Never did I read so fine a style as that of the History of Louis

Louis XIV. I read each paragraph two or three times, so highly am I delighted. Every line has its excellence ; each is supplied with fine reflections. No false thoughts ; nothing puerile. Add to which, the impartiality of the work is perfect.

When I have gone through the whole, I will send you some short remarks ; and, among others, some on German names, which are rather ill treated, and which may cast a shade of obscurity over the history ; since there are names so disfigured that the reader is obliged to guess who is the person meant. I wish you had composed all the works which have ever been written, and which seem necessary for instruction. Were this so, the reader might derive profit from the time he should allot to books.

I am sometimes out of patience at the trifles, the insignificant reflections, or the dryness, which pervade certain books. The reader has to rewrite such works : but you spare your readers that trouble. Whether a man have or have not judgment, he will acquire great profit by your labours. He need only possess memory.

L E T T E R CXII.

From the King.

Potsdam, November 18, 1742.

THY work, for ever doom'd to last ;
 A monument of ages past * ;
 Of fools, and knights, and bigots brave ;
 Of madmen, fighting for a grave ;
 Of Popes, the laughter of the wise—
 I've read with pleasure and surprise.

Too happy that I now exift,
 Some time ago had I deceas'd,
 A cutting stroke or murd'rous blow
 From thee, with these, had laid my mem'ry low.

Go on with this excellent work ; for the love
 of truth continue it, and for the happiness of
 mankind. A king exhorts you to record the
 follies of kings.

You have so strongly inspired me with the
 love of labour that I have written an epistle, a
 comedy, and memoirs, whicht I hope will be
 very curious. When the two former shall be
 corrected to my own satisfaction, I will send
 them to you. Of the third I can only commu-
 nicate fragmants ; for the work is of a nature
 that requires it should not be rendered public.

* Meaning Voltaire's Universal History.

T.

I am

I am however persuaded that you will find passages in it that are tolerable.

I perceive you have formed no bad opinion of our comedians ; they are properly dancers, among whom the family of La Cochois acts comedies. They play some pieces of the Italian theatre, and of Moliere, passably ; but I have forbidden them to lace on the buskin, which I find they are not worthy to wear.

The collection of antiques of the cardinal de Polignac is arrived ; nor have the statues suffered the least injury.

In thy ruins, oh Rome ! or thy reverend dust,
The portrait of Genius, of Wisdom the bust,
The sage, or the poet, why seek with such care,
Since living they're all to be found in Voltaire ?

The apostolic cardinal, who might have possessed you, was very wrong to collect all these busts ; but I, not having that honour, want your works in my library, and these remains of antiquity in my gallery. I wish the English may divert themselves as well this year, in Flanders, and as agreeably, as I propose to pass my carnival at Berlin. I have communicated the epidemic disease of war to Europe ; like as a coquette bestows certain favours on her gallants which they will remember. I am myself very fortunately cured ; and at present contemplate the

manner in which others may take and profit by the remedies administered. Fortune is wavering between the emperor and the queen of Hungary; and, in my opinion, the fortitude or the weakness of France will decide the contest.

Do not forget that I have assumed a certain degree of authority over you. To me you are accountable for your *ages*, your general histories, &c. as the christians are for their time to their gentle Saviour. Such is the consequence, my dear Voltaire, of an intercourse with kings; they encroach upon the rights of every man, and arrogate claims to which they have no pretensions. You must however send me your history, and think yourself very fortunate that you can escape my gripe yourself; for, had I consulted my own arguments, I long since should have printed a manifesto, in which I should have proved that you appertain to me, and that I was justified in seizing your body, wherever it could be found.

Adieu. Continue in good health; do not forget me; and be sure not to take root at Paris, in which case I am undone.

LETTER CXCIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE,

November, 1742.

WITH letter, rhyme, and repartee,
 For pedant lumber sent by me,
 Lumber at which you ought to spurn,
 Delightful answer you return.
 Thus, babbler having ta'en the lead,
 Tongue gallop, off he goes, full speed ;
 And thinks that, while he runs so fast,
 'Twere strange if he should be surpass'd ; }
 Till out of breath he stops at last : }
 Some single word a wit replies ;
 The list'ning crowd with laughter dies.

Your *humanity* is more than ever adorable ;
 for it is not possible continually to repeat *your majesty*. This is a very proper phrase for the princes of the empire to use, who can discover nothing in you but the king ; but I, who can perceive the man—I, who sometimes indulge my enthusiasm—I, in my raptures, forget the monarch, to think only of this enchanting man.

By what magic happens it, both at a time,
 With spells all your own, thus you reign and you rhyme ?
 That to rhyme is most difficult who shall deny ?
 Though courtiers their kings can with virtues supply,
 Can this name the prudent, and that call the gay,
 In the thunders of terror this monster array,

Say this is the peaceful, and t' other the wise,
 Till I, their historian, am charm'd by such lyes—
 Yet which of the parasites ever could tell
 Of a king who wrote verses so sweetly and well ?
 Thus gifted, to conquer or reign you but find
 To be mere recreation, the sports of your mind :
 Nay that art which the blest sons of genius adore,
 The art of the poet, to you is no more !
 You seize, thus imbued with empyreal fire,
 The falchion of Mars, of Apollo the lyre ;
 And, playful, with equal facility write
 As you conquer, whene'er you think proper to fight.

Did the queen of Hungary, and the king my lord and master, see the letter of your majesty, they could not forbear to laugh ; notwithstanding the ill which you have done the one, and the good which you have not done the other. Your comparison between a coquette and something better, who has bestowed her disagreeable favours, and laughs at her gallants while under the doctor, is as pleasant a thing as any said by men like Cæsar, Anthony, and Augustus, your predecessors ; men who performed great actions, and uttered witty sayings. Behave as you think proper toward kings ; beat them, abandon them, quarrel with them, make peace with them ; but never be inconstant to me, for I adore you.

Your favours dang'rous were to thosé ;
 For kings, as kings, treat friends like foes :

Deceit

Deceit they trade in ; but, for me,
No conscious infidelity
Assaults affection in its birth ;
I love, because I know, your worth.

It rains bad books, and vile verses, at this place ; but as your majesty will not judge of all our warriors by the affair of Lintz, neither will you pass sentence on the understanding of the French, from reading *Les Etrennes de la Saint Jean**, or the vulgarities of the abbé des Fontaines. There is nothing new among our Sybarites of Paris. The only anecdote which I think worthy of being related to your majesty, is the following :

Cardinal de Fleuri, after having been ill, thought proper, two days ago, not knowing what better to do, to say mass at a little altar, in a garden which was frozen. Messieurs Amelot and De Breteuil arrived, and told him he would certainly kill himself. Pshaw ! gentlemen, said he, you are mere chickens.—What a man ! And at the age of ninety ! May you, sir, live to the same age to say mass ; and may I be your assistant !

I am, with the most profound respect, &c.

* A kind of periodical title, which cannot be translated. T.

L E T T E R CXCIV.

From the King.

Berlin, December 5, 1742.

IN return for your Maid of Orleans, and your charming History, I send you a short comedy, containing scenes of all the follies which I have been able to recollect, and tack together. I had it performed at the nuptials of Cesario; but it was very indifferently acted.

D'Eguille, who has delivered your letter of old date to me, is arrived. He is said to contain more stuff than his brother; but of this I have not yet been able to judge.

I have only the alpha and omega of the Maid of Orleans. Could I but obtain the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh cantos, it would then be a pleasure of which you would have put me in full possession.

It seems to me that the creditors of those ladies, called the Seventeen Provinces *, are as pressing for payment as those gentlemen, in-

* Both copies read *dix-sept* (seventeen). I imagine it to be an error of the press, and that it ought not to be seventeen, but seven, unless the Netherlands and the seven United Provinces be meant inclusively. T.

titled the Marshals of France, are slow in their operations. With respect to your creditors, I beg you to tell them that I have many debts to liquidate with the Dutch; and that it is not yet very clear which of us will find a balance in our favour.

If Paris be the island of Cytherea, you are certainly the satellite of Venus. You revolve round that planet, and follow the orbit which it describes, from Paris to Brussels, and from Brussels to Cirey. Berlin has no attraction for you, unless the astronomers of our academy can entice you hither by their long telescopes. The northern people are not so effeminate as the nations of the west. The men with us are more robust, more masculine, more capable of labour and of business; but they are perhaps less agreeable. Yet is it exactly the sybarite life which you lead at Paris, and which you commend so much, that has occasioned the loss of fame among your troops and your generals.

While list'ning to the melancholy tale,
Pardon the truths severe I'm doom'd to speak;
Other historians might them veil or hide,
But me dissimulation ill befits *.

Adieu, my dear Voltaire. Write to me often; send me your works, and the Maid of Orleans.

* These lines are a parody from the Henriade. T.
I have

I have so much business on hand that my letter assumes a laconic appearance; but it will weary you the less, if it have not wearied you too much already.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CXCV.

From the King.

February 22, 1743.

WE yesterday said all the good of you that could be said of mortal man. The supper-hall was a temple, in which sacrifice was offered to you: and there certainly is something divine about you, for you immediately reward the good actions that have been done you. This morning I have received a charming letter, under your hand, which has given me great pleasure; not having for a long period received one before. I was, for two months together, overburthened with business, which prevented me from writing to you sooner.

I now ask an explanation, relative to the subject of your last letter but one: for the cardinal is dead, and affairs assume a different face. It is good to know what channels ought to be employed.

T 2

I very

I very sincerely participate in the trophies you have acquired. I seem to myself to have written Merope, and that it was to me that the public did justice.

I am about to depart for Silesia, but I shall not remain long there ; after which I will renew my intercourse with the Muses. Let me entreat you to send me the Maid of Orleans, for I am bent upon ravishing her charms ; and, with her, your history, your epigrams, your odes, and yourself. In fine, I hope, by one means or another, to see you here.

Do my character no injustice : in other respects you shall be allowed to joke with me as you think proper.

Adieu, my dear Voltaire. I esteem you, love you, and shall love you ever.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CXCVI.

From the King.

March 26, 1743.

I WAS well persuaded you would be pleased with my sister of Brunswic. She has received that happy gift of heaven, that ardour of mind, that vivacity, in which she resembles you,

you, and of which, unfortunately, Nature is too avaricious toward mankind.

The vaunted fire Prometheus stole
From heav'n, to animate your soul.
Audacious robber ! Yet in vain ;
His scanty hand could not contain
A spark for that unblushing crew
Who boldly claim the whole their due.

Their minds to this strange madness wend
To genius each and all pretend.
The worst of fools, if once thus bit,
Believe their worst of nonsense wit.
The shrew, who scolds the live-long day,
By scolding would her pow'rs display.
How oft by self-conceit is goaded
The ass, with learning overloaded !
How swells, and blesses Heav'n, for brain
Which words, or wind, could thus contain !

By wisdom would not Mirepoix
Rule France ; nay more, all Europe awe ?
To cure him, bid the doting elf
Listen, whene'er he talks himself.

I do not very well know where you are at present ; but I persuade myself you will sooner forget Berlin than be forgotten there. Such are the assurances of your admirer.

P. S. Of me your mind draws picture faint,
If me you want in daubing paint* ;
I claim no mean, no medium part :
Forget, or place me in your heart.

FREDERIC.

* M. de Voltaire had requested to have the king's picture.

LETTER CXCVII,

From the King.

MY DEAR VOLTAIRE, Potsdam, April 6, 1743.

YOU load me with favours, while I persist in gloomy silence. I receive the precious fruits of friendship, your nightly watchings and your studies; while I continue galloping from province to province, without being able to fix my wandering star, and return to my former haunts.

I am, however, returned from Breslau, after having acted the politician, the financier, and the general. I expect at present to taste some repose, and to recommence my commerce with the Muses. I shall soon send you the preface to my memoirs. I cannot remit the whole work, for it must not appear till after I and my contemporaries are dead; the reason of which is, it is written with a strict adherence to truth; I not having departed, in any respect, from that fidelity which a historian ought to communicate to his writings.

Your history of the human mind is admirable. But how humiliating is this history to our species, nay to providence itself! That is, if Providence

dence make choice of those who are appointed to govern the world, and serve as the pivots on which those revolutions turn that happen on earth.

I am sorry to hear that your ruling passion has weakened you so much; but I flatter myself the mind will support the body, as oil maintains the flame of a lamp.

D'Argens has had his comedy performed, at which we all went to sleep. He wished to have it represented at Paris, but from this I dissuaded him; for he would there most indubitably have been hissed. You stand alone; you wrote a tragedy at nineteen, and an epic poem at twenty. But every man is not Voltaire.

The ridiculous arts of the devotees of Paris have been heard of in the North. I well expected Voltaire must stand reproved, as soon as he should appear before an Areopagus of crooked and mitred Midases. Acquire the fortitude to despise a nation which is insensible to the merit of men like Belleisle and Voltaire; and come into a country where you are beloved, and where bigotry does not rule triumphant.

Adieu.

FREDERIC.

The Maid! The Maid! The Maid! And once again, the Maid of Orleans! Send her to

T 4 me,

me, for the love of God; or rather for the love
of yourself!

LETTER CXCVIII.

From the King.

Potsdam, May 21, 1742.

HOW long, a backslider, pray tell me, Voltaire,
Has old Saving-grace in your soul had a share?
By Mirepoix lectur'd, and sprinkled, and blest,
Are fasting, and hermits, and roots, now your taste?
With a twang through the nose, and a sanctified air,
The yawning philosopher mutters a pray'r;
His sins being pardon'd, he fights for the church,
And we sons of old Satan are left in the lurch.
St. Peter and Newton all Heav'n alarm;

Their claim to Voltaire to support they both arm,
Instead of triangle, the dozing old faint
A relic presents; and, in argument quaint,
Conception immaculate fully maintaine;

And martyrs and Mary sleep while he explains.

Apollo, Parnassus, the Muses all nine,
Vent their griefs, to perceive their fam'd valley divine
Left forlorn by the swan whose mellifluous strain
So lately enchanted the banks of the Seine.

But of grief, lo! a picture no heart can withstand!
Despair in her eye, the sage Locke in her hand,
Her hair all dishevell'd, her check all in tears,
Fair Emily, charming in sorrow, appears!

" Ho

" He is gone ! " she exclaims ; " I am harter'd, forsa'ca !
 " Distraction ! Eternally left to complain !
 " His motives ? Oh none ! 'Tis the moon at the full ;
 " He credits a tale of a cock and bull ! "

This is what I presume, from the letter you have written to the bishop of Sens, and from what all the letters from Paris contain. You may judge of my surprise, and of the astonishment of a philosophic mind, to see the minister of truth bend the knee before the idol of superstition.

The mitred Midases triumph, in this age, over Voltaire and the men of genius ; but this is apparently the age in which the ignorant, of every kind, are to find preferment in France, rather than the learned and the man of abilities. *O tempora ! O mores !*

Some forty learned parrots fit
 To pick holes in the coat of wit.
 Old custom and new grammar they
 Sometimes command, sometimes obey :
 Like slaves they yield what is not due,
 Like despots they have black-ball'd you.
 Afraid the reign of night must end,
 Should once your splendid sun ascend,
 They met, and cast a midnight spell,
 And still in all their darkness dwell.

I believe France is the only country in Europe

rope in which asses and fools may at present make their fortune. I send you the preface to my memoirs * ; the rest is not ostensible.

I do not write to you so often as I could wish; you must not however accuse me, but the innumerable occupations which divide my time.

Adieu, my dear Voltaire. Do not forget me, notwithstanding my silence; be certain that, as your friend, I do not think less frequently of you than I did formerly.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CXCIX.

From the King.

Potsdam, June 15, 1743.

PEACEFUL in harbour here I stand,
Nor wish my bark again the winds should brave;
Yet grieve to view the distant strand,
Where fate forbids a noble ship to save,

I wish you would at once come to Berlin, there to remain; and that you had the strength to shelter your light bark from the winds and hurricanes by which it has so often been tost in

* The work mentioned here, and in the last letter, is, *The History of my own Times.* T,

France.

France. How, my dear Voltaire, can you suffer them to exclude you ignominiously from the academy, while they applaud you at the theatre? Disdained at court, and adored in the city! This is a contrast which I cannot reconcile. The levity indeed of the French never suffers them to be consistent in their applause.

Come here, to a nation which will not change its judgment concerning you. Quit a country where Belleisle, Chauvelin, and Voltaire can find no protection,

Adieu,

FREDERIC.

Send me the Maid of Orleans, or I renounce you.

L E T T E R CC.

From the King.

Magdeburg, June 25, 1743.

PROSCRIB'D and persecuted in your own,
Be this your country; here your worth is known.

I am at present a greater wanderer than the Jew whom D'Argens* obliges to write and to

* Alluding to the Jewish Letters, by the marquis d'Argens. T.

travel.

travel. Another Sisyphus, I turn the wheel at which I am condemned to labour. I give a momentum to my little kingdom; and, in the shades of peace, strengthen that for which I am indebted to the arm of war. I reform old abuses, and give birth to new; correct faults, and commit others.

This tumultuous life may endure two months, unless the demon that haunts me should continue his disturbances longer. I believe I shall then find myself obliged to make a trip to Aix, there to correct the incorrigible machinery of my abdomen, by which your friend is occasionally tormented. Could I have the pleasure of meeting you there, it would be a very agreeable one; for it is my opinion that—

For jaundic'd patient, whom the stone,
And gout, and dropfy, call their own,
No med'cines which the learned tribe
E'er did, or ever shall prescribe,
Of so much efficacy are,
As conversation with Voltaire.
His piercing wit, and eye so keen,
To charm away the whims of spleen,
Or pain itself, are more availing
Than all Hippocrates and Galen.

If, leaving that place, you would come and
be an inhabitant of these countries, I promise
you

you an establishment with which I flatter myself you would be satisfied; especially when you should find yourself beyond the reach of the artifices and persecution of bigots. You have suffered too many insults in France, to remain there with honour; it becomes you to quit a country where your reputation receives daily stabs, and where each Midas is preferred to the highest employment.

Adieu, dear Voltaire. Let me entreat you to write me your sentiments; and be certain of my affection.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCI.

From M. de Voltaire.

The Hague, June 28, 1743.

FROM palace which, you must allow,
Though gilded once, is rotten now,
Both monument and emblem fit
Of human grandeur, human wit,
On you I call, to you appeal;
For you can hear, and you can feel.
For other palaces I pant,
Where you to art and science grant
Blest refuge. Soon the winged steed,
Hight Pegasus, of noble breed,

D

Do you but send, I'll quickly mount,
And at Berlin my griefs recount.

Has my hero received my letters from Paris, in which I have informed him that I should escape, and come to pay him my court? I sent them to David Gerrard; and the second address was to M. Fredericshof. Surely David Gerrard is not such a blockhead as to be unable to discover that this M. Fredericshof is the greatest of kings, and the greatest of men; the man of my heart; he whose presence will for some days render me happy.

I am therefore waiting at the Hague, with M. von Podewils, the orders of your humanity, and a *fcrespan** from your majesty.

Let me once again behold the great Frederic, and let me no more be troubled with the sight of the pedant Boyer, the old bishop of Mirepoix, who would please me much more were he at least twenty years older than he is.

While you, by beat of drum, terrific sound,
Through Prussia's towns are led, a weary round,
I, by my better angel guided, wing
My willing way to hear Apollo sing.

I am here with your worthy and amiable minister, who is inconsolable, and neither sleeps

* *Vor-spann*—A relay of horses. T.

nor eats, because the Dutch want the possessions of a great king at too cheap a rate. We must however accustom ourselves, sire, to see the Dutch love money as much as I love you. When, alas ! shall I leave these watery provinces, to see any hero, and my prince ?

L E T T E R CCII.

From the King.

Reinsberg, July 3, 1743.

I S E N D you a passport for horses with much eagerness. You will neither be drawn by Bucephalus, nor by Pegasus ; yet I shall love the horses the better, for having brought Apollo to Berlin.

Here you will be received with open arms, and I will give you the best establishment in my power.

I am about to depart for Stettin, and from thence for Silesia ; but I shall find a moment's leisure to see and assure you how much I esteem you.

Adieu.

F R E D E R I C.

L E T T E R C C I I I .

From M. de Voltaire.

MY KING, The Hague, in your vast and ruinous
palace, July 13, 1743.

I HAVE not the honour to be one of those heroes who travel with a fever. I am become a Manichæan, and admit two principles in the world: the good principle is the humanity of my hero; the bad is physical evil; and the last prevents me from enjoying the first.

Permit therefore, my adorable monarch, that soul which is so ill at its ease, in this paltry body, to remain, and not begin its travels under the uncertainty of finding, or of not finding, your majesty. If you intend to remain some weeks at Berlin, to Berlin will I fly : if you are still on the wing, and mean to hurry from the further part of Silesia to Aix-la-Chapelle, I will go thither, and wait for you in a warm bath ; which however will be much cooler than your imagination.

I have the honour to send you a dose of opium, to be taken during your travels; a packet of academic phrases, among which your majesty will find the discourse of Maupertuis, accom-

panied with some remarks, by madame du Chatelet. Would to God the French were guilty of no other mistakes than those pointed out to your majesty by madame du Chatelet; the emperor would still have held Bohemia, and would at least sup at Munich, instead of being in absolute want at Franckfort.

But, notwithstanding the noble retreats of your Strasburg friend *, and the errors of Dettingen, the French appear not to be destitute of courage. The musketeers alone, to the number of two hundred and fifty, broke through five lines of the English, who few of them gave way but with loss of life. The great number of our nobility killed and wounded is an incontestable proof of valour. What would not this nation effect, were it commanded by a prince like you?

If the people have courage, the ministry also have fortitude; a new army on the Maese will soon afford the United Provinces subject of deliberation.

I believe the treaty between Sardinia and Spain to be nearly concluded. This is a new scene in the play; and what is passing in Sweden may likewise change the face of affairs in the north.

* Marshal de Broglie. T.

VOL. VII.

U

Amid

Amid the shock of nations, madly foes,
 Watching with active eye this poor world's woes,
 Triumphant, arm'd with thunderbolt and lyre,
 My hero reckless views the spreading fire.
 Germania ruin'd ; Sweden ill at ease ;
 The haughty English sov'reigns of the seas,
 Who vaunt their honest motives, yet maintain
 Clandestine views, victorious on the main ;
 The Dutch one half their friends, one half their slaves ;
 Opprobrium braving, so his life he saves,
 Old Broglie flying, lost, confus'd, and stunn'd
 By accidents which well he might have shunn'd—
 All these my hero laughing sees ; while I
 Laugh too, for laughter best may care defy.

I am afraid all this partakes of the fever delirium : but the greatest delirium I am conscious of, is the desire to meet your majesty. Where shall I see you ? where shall I be happy ? Must it be at Berlin, or at Aix-la-Chapelle ?

Behold me at your feet, charming monarch, and most singular man ; waiting your orders to guide my steps.

L E T T E R C CIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

July, 1743.

BE mine the heroes who repose
 Beneath the myrtle and the rose :

Fors;

For, while they sport with dance and song,
Respiring earth endures no wrong.
Let Cæsar for the laurel write,
The witty Cæsar 's my delight ;
Or change the order of the sphere,
And give the world another year ;
In th' arms of love should he recline,
The loving Cæsar still is mine ;
Nor grieve I much to see the sport
Indulg'd in at Bithynia's court ;
Enlarg'd, magnanimous, and kind,
To Cato's I prefer his mind ;
Like Tully he, of soul sublime,
The heights of eloquence would climb ;
Of king of whom I've heard, or read,
The starry track he seem'd to tread.
But when old Rubicon in vain
The lust of power would restrain ;
When all his waters can't assuage
The phrenzy of ambitious rage ;
To weep the man I turn aside,
Who might have liv'd the poet's pride ;
Who might have been for ever great ;
Who might—have sav'd a falling state !

You, sire, are more happy, after taking Silesia, than was your predecessor after the battle of Pharsalia. You, like him, write commentaries ; like him, you love society, of which you are the delight. You send me charming verses, and a preface worthy of yourself, which announces a work worthy of the preface. I can forbear no longer ; your loadstone attracts me

too powerfully, while I am repelled by the load-stone of France. Were there a king in Cochinchina who should think, write, and speak like you, embark I must, to throw myself at his feet. All people, who have but a spark of taste and reason, ought to undertake such voyages, in imitation of the queen of Sheba.

I notwithstanding own, great king, with my impertinent frankness, that I think you sacrifice yourself a little too much, in this charming preface to your memoirs. Pardon—yet no; I ask no pardon—you suffer it to be too perceptibly seen that you have neglected the spirit of morality, to indulge the spirit of conquest. What have you to reproach yourself with? Had you not real claims on Silesia, at least on the greater part of it? and did not the refusal of justice sufficiently authorise your act? I shall say no more; except that, in every article, I think your majesty too forbearing, and that you are daily more and more justified.

Your majesty is to me a most seducing coquette. You grant me many favours, that you may inspire all the ardour of hope to obtain the last. What more convenient opportunity can I find, to go and pass a few days with my hero? He has imprisoned the thunder, and is sporting with his lyre. People here do not sport; the lightning flashes

flashes over our heads. This vile Mirepoix is as severe, as fanatic, and as imperious, as cardinal de Fleuri was mild, accommodating, and polite. How much does he make us regret that good man; and how inferior is the preceptor of our dauphin to the preceptor of our king! The choice which has been made of him, is the only one by which his majesty has afflicted the nation. Our other ministers, and the king himself, are beloved. He applies himself to affairs, is assiduous, just, and very sincerely loves the most amiable woman on earth. It is Mirepoix alone who renders the serene sky of Versailles and Paris cloudy. The belles-lettres are enveloped in a gloomy fog. Men are in despair, to see Boyer in the possession of the seats of Fenelon and Bossuet—Boyer, who was born a persecutor! I know not by what fatality it happens that every monk who has risen into power at court, has been equally cruel and ambitious. The first benefice Mirepoix received, after the death of the cardinal, was worth near eighty thousand livres per annum. (Above three thousand pounds sterling.) The first apartment given him at Paris was that of the queen; and every body is in daily expectation to see his head, which your majesty so well calls the head of an ass, decorated by a red bonnet brought from Rome.

True it is *Marie-a-la-Coque* was not written by him; but it is equally true, sire, that I have not written the letter, which passes under my name, to the author of *Marie-a-la-Coque*. I have only written a letter to the bishop of Mirepoix; in which I have complained, with much ardour and much inutility, of the calumnies of his creatures and spies. I do not bow the knee before Baal: and, while I respect my king, I equally despise those who, under the shade of his authority, abuse their power, and are only great to do mischief.

You, sire, alone console me, seeing what I see; and, when ready to weep at the decline of the arts, I say there is one monarch still in Europe by whom they are beloved, by whom they are cultivated, and who is the glory of his age. I add, soon shall I see this charming monarch; this man, though a king; this sceptered Chau-lieu; this Tacitus; this Xenophon. Yes, I must be gone; madame du Chatelet must not prevent me; I must forsake Minerva for Apollo. To see your majesty is my ruling passion, which must once in my life be indulged.

Nothing can be more unnecessary than to add my profound respects, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R C C V .

From the King.

Potsdam, August 20, 1743.

I HAVE only been here two days, and have found three of your letters.

Two gods seldom friends, gods of reason and rhyme,
In concord preside o'er your concerts sublime.
Our minds to enlighten, and rid us of sorrow,
The gall-dripping pen of old Persius you borrow.
Deform'd as she is, when her face you reveal,
Hypocrify shrinking her shame would conceal.
Of Mirèpoix's ghost who can doubt the delight,
Should you undertake his eulogium to write?
In vengeance the arts all assembled would come,
To scatter his ashes, and hurl down his tomb;
In vain would Neuville wordy monument raise,
The force of the satire would rise with the praise.

I pity those who have the misfortune to offend you; for, in four lines, you will render them ridiculous *ad secula seculorum*.

I shall not go to Aix, as I intended. You know I have the honour to be a political atom; in consequence of which, my stomach is obliged to digest the combination of European affairs, which do not always perfectly agree with its texture,

You seem to me, my dear Voltaire, something like the weathercock of Parnassus, and as if you had not yet decided on the part you ought to take. I shall say nothing to you on the subject, for all that I could urge would seem suspicious. The picture you have drawn of France is painted in glowing colours ; but, say what you please, the army that flies for three successive years, and that is beaten whenever it fights, is certainly no assemblage of Cæsars or of Alexanders.

My portrait is not, nor is it intended to be, painted ; I can therefore give you nothing but medals.

Vale.

FREDERIC,

LETTER CCVI.

From the King.

Potsdam, August 24, 1743,

IT is to be at Berlin, then, that I am to have the pleasure to behold the French Apollo descend from his Parnassus, to oblige me, and familiarize himself a little with the profaic vulgar. Let me beg you, my dear Voltaire, to bring

bring with you good store of indulgence ; and especially let no grammarian measure the length of our phrases by the fathom, nor punish us for the folly of a solecism. You will see a company of comedians that is forming, a rising academy, and, above all, many persons who love and admire you.

There is no *dne de Mirepoix* at Berlin*. We have a cardinal, and bishops, some of whom make love in front, and others in rear; who are better read in the divinity of Epicurus than in that of Saint Paul; who consequently are benevolent enough not to persecute any one ; and who dispose of nothing but parish offices and choristers places, for which you are no aspiring candidate,

Disjoined though you bring her, yet
 Your Maid of Orleans don't forget ;
 The deeds of all your present race
 Of heroes, hers will soon efface ;
 Of flying Broglio, and the sheep
 Which he can neither kill nor keep ;
 Of wand'ring Maillebois, who lost
 Himself, as well as all his host ;
 Of Ségur, who so soon surrenders ;
 And all your other brave defenders,

* The bishop Boyer used to sign himself *anc. eveque de Mirepoix*, as an abbreviation of *ancien, &c.* This Voltaire sarcastically changed into *dne*, or *als* of Mirepoix. T.

I will

I will shew you as much of my Memoirs as I think I ought to shew you. They are true, consequently of such a nature as not to be made public till some future age,

Adieu, dear Voltaire, till we meet.

FREDERIC,

L E T T E R CCVII.

From the King.

Potsdam, September 15, 1743.

YOU have said so much to me in behalf of France, and her king, that it were to be wished all monarchs had such subjects, and all republics such citizens. When the same zeal animates every man, and when the public interest becomes the interest of every individual, feelings like these then constitute the true strength of kingdoms.

It had been well if France and Sweden had possessed military men who thought like you; but it is very certain, say what you will, that the feebleness of the generals, and the timidity of administration, have been almost destructive of the renown of these two nations, whose very name, not fifty years ago, was the terror of Europe.

Let us examine in what manner France has acted toward her allies. What an example to Europe was that secret peace which cardinal de Fleuri made, unknown to the kings of Spain and Sardinia ! The father-in-law of his monarch was abandoned, and Lorrain acquired. How unheard-of is the manner in which France gives up the emperor, sacrifices Bavaria, and ruins a prince who is so respectable even in extreme distress ! I speak not merely of the distress of the prince, but of a situation the most dreadful that can happen to a private person. What were the machinations of the cardinal in Russia, when we were on the most friendly terms ! What propositions have not been made at Mentz, to open a road to peace, or more properly to kindle a new war ! With how little vigour do the French speak, when they ought to display fortitude ! And, even when some appearance is discoverable in their words, how little correspondent are their military operations !

The French however are the most charming people in Europe ; and, were they not as a nation to be feared, they would deserve to be beloved. A king worthy to reign over them, governing sagely, and acquiring the esteem of all Europe, might restore them to their former splendour ; which

which Broglio, and so many others of still inferior abilities, have somewhat eclipsed.

It were a work worthy a prince of such high merit to repair what others have injured ; and never could sovereign acquire more glory than when he should defend his people against furious foes ; or when, by changing the state of affairs, he should find means to reduce his adversaries, humbly to request he would grant them peace.

I shall admire all the acts of this great man ; nor will any of the sovereigns of Europe be less jealous of his success than I shall be.

But I did not intend to talk politics to you ; for this is exactly like presenting a dose of physic to a beloved mistress. I imagine I should do much better were I to make poetry the topic : but we cannot all act as we wish ; and when you write poetry to me, to which I ought to answer, you talk to me like a cup-bearer, who, having the gift of drinking, brings large bumpers to a poor valetudinarian, whose stomach scarcely can digest water.

Adieu, dear Voltaire. May Heaven preserve you from sleepless nights, fever, and impertinent visitors.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R C C V I I I .

From M. de Voltaire.

Undated.

To kings rebellious, you could find
 The means to captivate my mind ;
 In you the joys I deem most sweet
 It is my happy doom to meet.
 My General History, and my Maid,
 I come to end in safety's shade,
 Which you bestow, where fearless I
 May all the bigot crew defy.

I will therefore depart, my adorable master, to return as soon as I have put my affairs in order. I speak to you with my accustomed frankness : I have imagined I perceived I should be less agreeable to you, were I to come in the company of others ; and I own that, appertaining solely to your majesty, my mind will be more at its ease.

I have not the ambition to become an envoy, like Destouches and Prior ; two poets who each concluded a treaty of peace between France and England. You will act as you shall please with all the kings on earth, and I shall not interfere ; but I earnestly conjure you to write a word to me, which I may shew to the king of France.

Yours

You reproach him, in the letter which you deigned to write to me from Potsdam, for having left the emperor in extreme distress; as well as for having made insinuations at Mentz contrary to your interests. Since that letter was written, your majesty has been informed that the king of France has granted the emperor subsidies; and I imagine you have no doubt at present that Hatzel, who negociated, or rather did nothing but blunder, at Mentz, was a rash person, who, should you wish it, would receive punishment. Be therefore somewhat better contented; and let me conjure you to deign to write to me, were it but four lines in general terms.

All I wish you to say is, that you are now satisfied respecting the inclinations of France; that no person ever presented you with a more advantageous picture of his king; that you have reason to believe me, because you have never been deceived by me; and that you are well determined to be the ally of a prince so prudent, and so firm in his purposes.

These vague expressions will not pledge you to any act, and I dare affirm they will produce a good effect; for, if descriptions have been given you but little honourable to the king of France, I can assure you that you have been painted to him in the blackest colours; and assuredly

suredly justice has been done to neither. Permit me therefore to profit by this favourable opportunity; and thus let me restore two monarchs so dear and estimable to the good opinion of each other. Add to this, they will render me happy for life: I shall shew your letter to the king; and perhaps may obtain restitution of a part of my effects which the good cardinal took from me. I will come here* to spend this recovered wealth, which I shall owe to you.

Be persuaded of the good effects that will result. I shall be unsuspected; and the day on which I shall be permitted to tell his majesty all I think of your person, will be the second happiest day in my life: the first will be that on which I shall return to your feet, to settle in Prussia, and to begin a new life dedicated only to you.

* From this passage we may conclude the letter was written while M. de Voltaire was in Prussia (perhaps from Berlin to the king at Potsdam), whither he this time went, or rather was sent, on political business. T.

LETTER CCIX.

From the King.

October 7, 1743.

FRANCE has hitherto been supposed the asylum of unfortunate kings; I wish my capital to become the temple of great men. Come hither, my dear Voltaire, and dictate whatever can be agreeable to you. I wish to give you pleasure; and if we wish to oblige any man, it is necessary to conform to his mode of thinking.

Choose house or apartments; make your own conditions; concert whatever may be necessary for the pleasures or the superfluities of life, that is, for whatever can make you happy. Leave the rest to me. You will always remain free, and entirely master of your destiny. I wish not to enchain you, except by friendship and benevolence.

You shall have passports for your horses, and every thing you can require. I shall see you on Wednesday, and shall profit by the moments that remain to enlighten myself by the blaze of your potent genius. I entreat you to believe I shall ever to you be the same.

Adieu.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR E,

The Hague, October 28, 1743.

YOU always travel like an eagle, and I like a tortoise. But how is it possible to travel too slowly, when quitting your majesty? At length I am in Holland; and the first thing I there met with was an English paper, in which your Anti-Machiavel is cited, in parallel with Polybius and Xenophon. Two pages from the book are transcribed, in which you prove the advantages that fortified places are of to princes; and the temerity of the allies, in pretending to enter France, is there demonstrated.

At length your worth is known :
 By authors cited as an author grave ;
 By monarchs, as a monarch wise and brave ;
 Respected are your pow'r and throne
 By Dutchman free, by Russian born a slave ;
 Triumphant might you march beside
 The Danube shores, or banks of Save,
 And humble Austrian pride.
 The victor's right you wisely wave,
 No more o'er wretchedness you reign,
 More worthy meed you crave ;
 No more your royal hand you stain,

No more in sanguinary floods you conquest lave :
 Such deeds you rightly blame.
 I can no more : I would—but, to my shame,
 My jaded muse can rhyme no more in *ave*.

The more I think of *il Tito*, of *il forte**, the
 more do I affirm Berlin to be my country.

Ho ! good meillieurs Gerard ! My chamber ! Make hafie !
 A desk for my papers ! Some wine to my taste !
 Not that juice manufatur'd by Lognier of Liege,
 Which throat made of iron might well disoblige ;
 Which I nick-nam'd *afs* * * * †, nor call back the term ;
 Fit liquor for no man but kings, I affirm.
 Good claret for me, unadulterate, pure ;
 Or wit or wine mixt taste refin'd can't endure :
 Vauture's, Marivaux's; metaphysical toil,
 Conduce but to blend, to confuse, and to spoil.

L E T T E R CCXI.

From M. de Voltaire.

Lille, November 16, 1743.

AND is it true ? Did you indeed
 From Austrian or Bohemian win
 The drum which dying Ziska bade
 Them manufacture from his skin ?

* These are references to some Italian opera, I suppose, which no doubt were familiar to the king, but which a translator cannot be expected perfectly to understand. T.

† *Piffat d'âme.*

A dead

A dead man's hide is little worth,
Though, when alive, a hero he :
Your heroes do not oft escape
The worm's unmanner'd gluttony.

To hide of Zilia Fate decreed
Nor worm nor reptile should lay claim ;
But should through ages be preserv'd
In drum immortal as his name.

'Twas odd enough ! But pray be pleas'd,
Oh mighty king ! to understand—
Your hero, who would save his hide,
Must condescend to have it tann'd.

Sire, keep your own ; for God himself,
Who drew it on thus well to fit,
Could scarcely, should he try once more,
A new one fill so full of wit !

It is not infinitely respectful to ask a great king questions : but Solomon was treated thus ; and the Solomon of the north must accustom himself to enlighten mankind.

Your majesty will therefore forgive my temerity, when I ask what is meant by an ark found at Glatz. Your majesty perhaps will tell me I must address myself to Jordan : but this Jordan, sire, is indolent, amiable though he be ; and you would regulate four or five provinces, write two hundred verses, and compose four thousand crotchets in score, in less time than he would produce a single letter.

I am at Lisle, which is a city something like

Berlin ; but I neither see an opera there, nor a second *Titus*. For your majesty, the queen mother, and the princess Ulrica, no substitutes can be found ; neither have I an army of three hundred thousand men, with which I might carry off the princess. But, in revenge, the king of France has more ; for the present estimate states him to have three hundred and twenty-five thousand, invalids included. They are three hundred thousand hounds on full chase, that scarcely can be kept in. They yelp, and howl, and struggle, and break couple, to run hot at the English, and their slow servants the Dutch. The whole nation, in truth, displays incredible ardour. We may fortunately add, your Strasburg friend* will no more pretend to command armies ; and the emperor, supported by your majesty and France, may soon have operas played at Munich.

As I have been bold enough to put various questions to your majesty, I will tell you a short tale ; though perhaps you have already heard it.

Some months ago, the princess Adelaide, the third daughter of the king my master, having thirteen louis (or guineas) in her pocket, got up during the night, dressed herself without aid, and

* Marshal de Broglie. T.

left

left her chamber. Her governess awoke, and asked her where she was going; and she very ingenuously confessed she had ordered a groom to keep two horses ready, that she might go to command the army, and aid the emperor. Should she but hear that your majesty has interfered, she will hereafter sleep in peace.

At the moment I have the honour to write to your majesty, our troops are on their march to go and take old Brisac.

With respect to our comedians, I have heard a singular anecdote in this city of Lisle; which is that, while it was besieged by the duke of Marlborough, they acted plays every night, and that the comedians then gained upwards of a hundred thousand livres. (More than four thousand pounds sterling.) You must allow, sire, this is a nation formed for pleasure and war.

Titus continues to entreat your majesty in behalf of poor Courtils, who is at Spandau without a nose *.

I throw myself at the feet of your humanity, &c.

* To understand this passage well, see—Memoirs of M. de Voltaire, written by himself, page 90. T.

LETTER CCXII.

From the King.

Berlin, December 4, 1743.

OF warrior fam'd the skin is here,
Whose very name inflicted fear,
When, after having fought so well,
Grim Death had sent his soul to hell.
'Tis here ; henceforth here let it be,
For curious fools to come and see.

Your fleeting soul some future day
(Far hence, I hope) shall wing its way,
That is, be row'd, the boatman brib'd,
To land which lyars have describ'd.
Then critic Marfyas shall begin
Experiments upon your skin ;
But Envy, for the rash design,
Once more shall feel the wrath divine.

Yes, the skin of Zisca, or, to speak more accurately, the drum of Zisca, is among the spoils which we have brought from Bohemia.

I am well pleased to hear you are arrived in good health at Lifle. I am always in fear of coaches breaking down.

You are more enthusiastic than ever concerning your fifteen hundred scabby Frenchmen *,

* *Galeux de François.*

who

who are in an island of the Rhine, which they have not the courage to leave. You must be very barren of great events, since you make so much noise about such wretched trifles. But a truce to politics.

I believe the Dutch may act pantomimes, when the actors come from foreign countries. They may possess fine genius, when you shall be at the Hague ; famous ministers, when Carteret shall repair thither ; and heroes, when the road of the king my uncle* shall lie through their marshes, is on his return to his island.

Fredericus Voltarium salutat.

L E T T E R CCXIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R E ,

Paris, January 7, 1744.

I HAVE at once received enough to turn more than one brain—a former letter from your majesty, dated November the twenty-ninth ; two medals, which represent at least a part of the countenance of the king and the man of genius ; the portrait of her majesty the queen mother ; that of the princess Ulrica ; and in fine,

* The king of England. T.

to complete these favours, delightful verses from the great Frederic, which begin thus :

*Quitterez-vous bien sûrement
L'empire de Midas, votre ingrate patrie* ?*

The marquis de Fenelon had all this wealth in his pocket ; nor would he part with it till he found he could keep it no longer. He has retarded the negociation, as if he had been stipulating with the Dutch. But I am now in full possession. I have kissed all the portraits ; let the princess Ulrica blush if she please.

Such charms august cares ! Ah ! Who shall dare ?
Mad were the wish, the will !
And yet to see, possess them, and forbear,
Were madness greater still !

I did so, sire, to your verses ; the harmony and vivacity of which have produced almost as great effects upon me as the miniature of her royal highness. I said—

Whence come these sounds, that doubly cheer
The glowing heart and lift'ning ear ?
Do men or gods thus sweetly play ?
Or do the tuneful muses stray ;
Fresh garlands strewing as they go,
With words that win, and thoughts that flow ?

* And will you really quit the kingdom of Midas, your ungrateful country ?

Or

Or is it Amphion's wondrous lyre,
That rears the turret, dome, and spire?
Or old Arion's harmony,
Attracting all the tribes of sea?
Let me my spell-bound sense convince:
'Tis—or Apollo, or my prince!

To song so charming soon succeed,
From thistle-bed, and long-ear'd breed,
You know the animal I mean *,
Discordant brays of bursting spleen,
Hark! He begins—"Peace! Hear me sing!
"Admire no more your poet-king;
"Say, what is he, if I but ope
"My mouth? I, who with monarchs cope!
"What though he rank with Europe's kings,
"I Europe hold in leading strings!"

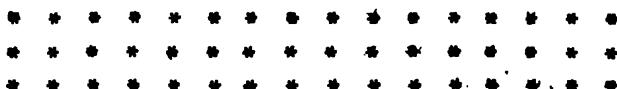
Achilles, as the fable says,
Was tutor'd, in his boyish days,
By some odd kind of quadrupede,
Half horse, half man, a strange mixt breed.
In modern times the wonder 's greater:
Our preceptors we find dame Nature
Has form'd, that she might all surpass,
Not half-and-half, but wholly ass!

* Boyer, bishop of Mirepoix, and preceptor to the Dauphin. T.

LETTER CCXIV.

From the King.

April 7, 1744.



In my own despite, here are verses which your Apollo has wreted from me ; by him am I still inspired.

Your Merope has been delivered to me, and I followed the orders of the author in the distribution of his book. I am not astonished at the success of the piece. The corrections you have made in it have rendered it, in chastity, plan, probability, and pathos, superior to all your other theatrical pieces ; though Mahomet has more force, and Brutus finer lines.

My sister Ulrica sees your dream in part accomplished. A king asks her for his consort, and the wishes of the Swedish nation all centre in her. To this enthusiasm, this fanaticism, my tender friendship for her has been obliged to cede. She is going into a country where her talents will induce her to act a grand and sublime part.

Be pleased to tell Rothemburg, if you see him, it is not well in him not to write to me. Since he

he has been at Paris, I hear no more of him than if he were at Pekin. Your atmosphere resembles the fountain of Jouvence, and your voluptuousness the spells of Circe ; but Rothemburg I hope will escape a metamorphosis.

Adieu, admirable historian, great poet, charming author of the Maid, who is kept the invisible and gloomy prisoner of *Circe*. Farewell, lover of Valori's cook-maid, of *madame du Chatelat*, and of my sister. I recommend myself to the protection of your talents ; and especially to your love of study, from which I expect my sweetest and most delightful amusements.

F R E D E R I C,

The house is disgarnishing that had been begun to be furnished for you at Berlin.

L E T T E R CCXV.

From the King.

Berlin, December 18, 1746.

THE marquis de Paulmy shall be welcomed, as the son of a French minister whom I esteem; and as a disciple of Parnassus, with Apollo's own passport.

* No letters have been found of the year 1745, and but few of the following years.

I am

ladium, and the finest conquest I ever made in my life : for, with respect to you, you are inconstant, ungrateful, perfidious ; nay, I know not what I should say, did I not forgive you, and all Frenchmen, out of my respect to Louis XV.

Adieu—the bell tingles to prayers at the theatre. Barbarini, Cochois, and Hauteville call me ; I am going to admire them. I love perfection in every profession, in every art ; for this reason I cannot refuse my esteem to the author of the Henriade.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR E,

Cirey, January 24, 1747.

AT length I have received the packet of the twenty-fourth of November. An infernal courier, to whose charge this packet was committed, with all its charming contents, inclosed in a box directed to madame du Chatelet at Paris, galloped so fast that he galloped away with it to Strasburg ; and afterward left it in the town of Troyes, eighteen leagues from this place.

Fair

Fair Albion's admirals, with conq'ring sword,
Cape Breton, having ta'en, might have restor'd ;
Nay, France might have recover'd all she lost,
While we were waiting for the tardy post.

We always return to our ruling passions. You write verses, whenever you have no battles to fight. I imagined you had addicted yourself entirely to prose.

Your genius, which no limits yet has found,
From pallid Wisdom's hill, with sportive bound
Or wavy flight, descent could not refrain,
To playful Poetry's enchanting plain.

You fall on the Austrians and Saxons ; you grant peace to a king, your enemy, in his capital ; you conquer metaphysics ; you write the Memoirs of an age of which you are the first man ; and finally you write poetry, of which you assuredly write more than I, with whom it is all over, and who have given up the trade.

I have not seen the poem with which you have regaled M. de Maurepas ; but I was in possession of the Epistle with which you have honoured the president of your academy, and which is very charming. The du Gué-Trouin, half man and half sea-hog, is very pleasant : but the Epistle of the Vanity of Fame and of Interest delights me still more.

The portrait of the islander—

*Qui de son cabinet pense agiter la terre ;
De ses propres sujets bâbile séducteur ;
Des princes et des rois dangereux corrupteur, &c.**

is a morsel of the greatest force and beauty. The contradictions of man are well touched upon in this Epistle.

Of madmen, gaining mad applause,
Your hand a bold, grand, picture draws ;
The story tells of human life ;
Eventful, troubled, tale of strife !
'Tis thus the sage looks down, from Wisdom's seat,
And views the vale of Mis'ry at his feet.

I involuntarily attributed the Ode on War to some poor citizen, but good poet, who was weary of paying the tenth, and the tenth of the tenth, and of seeing his miserable hut ravaged. No such thing ! It is by the king who began the squabble ; he who, with arms in hand, has gained a province, and five battles.

Your majesty writes fine verses, but you laugh at mankind. Who knows whether you do not think as you say, when you write ? Humanity may perhaps hold converse with you in that

* Who in his closet thinks to disturb the world ; the artful seducer of his own subjects ; the dangerous corrupter of princes and of kings, &c.

very

very cabinet in which Policy and Fame have signed orders for the assembling of armies. To-day we are animated by the passions of the hero; to-morrow we reason like philosophers. This is all very consistent, according as the wheels of the thinking machine happen to be wound up. I can assure your majesty, you are yourself a proof to me of what you deigned to write to me, ten years ago, on the doctrine of freedom and necessity.

I not long since again read this short Essay. It made me tremble; and the more I think on it the more I find myself of your majesty's opinion. I wished very much we should be free, and I did every thing in my power to believe the doctrine. Experience and reason have convinced me that we are only machines; formed to go for a certain time, as it shall please God. Thank nature for the manner in which your machine is made: for my part, I thank her for having wound it up so as to write the Epistle to *Hermotimus*.

*Le vainqueur de l'Asie, en subjuguant cent rois
Dans le rapide cours de ses brillans exploits,
Estimait Arioste, et méditait son livre;
Heureux si sa raison, plus docile à le suivre,
Réprimant un courroux trop fatal à Clitus,
N'eût, par ce meurtre affreux, obscurci ses vertus !*

*Mais ce même Alexandre, appasant sa furie,
En faveur de Pindare épargna sa patrie*.*

No one in France has written better verses than these ; and there are many in this Epistle of equal force, perspicacity, and elegance. Perhaps your majesty has by this time read *Catalina*. You will see whether our academicians write as well as yourself.

Many thanks, sire, for having, in your Ode on your academy, deigned to employ, in the conclusion of the strophe, the three short lines of three feet ; a measure which I imagined, and which I only had used. By embellishing it, you have given it sanction. I know but few measures that are more harmonious ; nor are there many ears capable of such delicacies. Those of your half-blind mathematician, whom your majesty mentions, certainly are not †. We, the adepts, who understand each other, are few in number ; the rest

* The conqueror of Asia, subjecting a hundred kings in his splendid course, esteemed Aristotle, and meditated on his book. Happy had he been had his more gentle reason followed its doctrines, and repressed his too fatal wrath against Clitus ; he then had not dimmed his virtues by so hateful a murder. Yet this same Alexander, calming his fury, spared the birth-place of Pindar, in favour of the poet.

† This half-blind mathematician was Leonard Euler, who was one of the greatest men of the age, though but ill acquainted with French poetry.

are the profane. All the initiated ought to assemble at your court.

L E T T E R CCXVII.

From the King.

February 22, 1747.

I FIND you did not write your Semiramis for Paris. Men do not labour carefully to produce a tragedy, and suffer it to remain locked up in obscurity. I guess your meaning. Confess; you have written this piece for our theatre of Berlin. This is certainly a compliment which you have paid me, and which your discretion or your modesty will not permit you to avow. In this sense I return you my thanks; and wait for, that I may applaud, the piece: though we may boldly applaud, without having seen your writings. It is extreme injustice on the part of the public, or rather in the intrigues of cabal, to rob you of the praises which you merit.

I find you are determined to write history. Well, since so it must be, follow this unnatural impulse, which I shall no longer oppose.

The work on which I am busied is neither in the style of memoirs nor of commentaries. I am not my own hero; it is fatuity in any man

to think himself a being so remarkable that the world ought to be circumstantially informed of all that relates to his individual person. I paint the changes that have happened in Europe, at large; and apply myself to sketch out whatever may be remarkable, or ridiculous and contradictory, in the conduct of those by whom Europe is governed. I have given an abstract of the most important negotiations, and the most memorable deeds of war. I have seasoned the narrative with reflections on the causes of events, and on the different effects of which a like cause is productive, when it happens in other times, or among other nations.

The details of war which you disdain, are no doubt those long journals which contain a dull enumeration of a thousand minute trifles; and in this you are right. We ought however to distinguish between the materials, and the capacity of those by whom they are generally employed. Were we to read a description of Paris, in which the author should amuse himself by giving the exact dimensions of every house in that immense city, and in which he should not omit the plan of the vilest brothel, the author and his book would be condemned to universal laughter; but we should not therefore say Paris is a dull city. It is my opinion that the great deeds

deeds of war, written concisely and with truth, so as to develop the reasons of the leader of an army in his actions, and as it were to expose the soul of his operations—I repeat, such memoirs could not but be instructive to all those who addict themselves to the profession of arms. They are like lessons given by an anatomist to a statuary, by which the latter is taught what are the contractions of the muscles of the human body when in motion. All arts have their examples and their precepts; why should not war, by which we defend our country, and save nations from approaching ruin, not have them likewise?

Should you continue to write on the late war, it will become me to cede the field of battle to you. Neither is my work written for the public. I have had very serious thoughts of dying, for I have been slightly attacked by an apoplexy: my constitution and age restored me to life. Had I descended to the shades, I should have watched Lucretius and Virgil, till the moment when I should have seen you arrive; for your place in Elysium must be that of being seated between those two gentlemen. Not but I am better pleased to appoint a rendezvous with you in this world; my curiosity concerning infinitude, and the principles of things, is not sufficiently great to induce me to hasten the journey.

Y 3

You

You lead me to hope I shall see you again ; but I will not flatter myself with the supposition, till I actually behold you ; for I have no great confidence in this journey. You may however expect a kind welcome.

Ungrateful though you are, I love you still ;
Kind is my heart, nor stubborn is my will.

The duke de Richelieu has seen dauphins, festivals, ceremonies, and fools : such is the lot of an ambassador. I have seen the little Paulmy, who is as affable as he is amiable and witty. Our wits robbed his portmanteau before he departed. He was obliged to leave us a charming comedy, which has been successful in representation. He must at present be at Paris, and I beg you to give my compliments to him ; tell him he will continually be remembered here, as one of the most amiable of men.

You lent your Maid of Orleans to the duchess of Wirtemberg ; and she, be it known to you, caused it to be copied during the night. Such are the people in whom you confide ; yet those who most merit your confidence, or rather to whom you ought totally to abandon yourself, are the very people of whom you are suspicious.

Adieu. May nature grant you the strength necessary to come to this country ; and may the
still

still preserve you many years, for the ornament
of letters, and the honour of the human mind !

L E T T E R CCXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

March, 1742.

THE spinning fisters, call'd the Fates,
As he who told this tale relates,
Hearing the damn'd, that daily came,
Recount strange stories of your fame,
Your verse, your vict'ries, and your laws,
Your conqu'ring arm which earth o'crawes,
And all the acts you had achiev'd,
Of kings the eldest you believ'd.

O'er all they hear the Parcae pore,
Then straight from black Cocytan shore
The haggard eldest, Atropos,
Of hateful beldams most morose,
By Time attended, they depute
Their dire benefits to execute.
Grey hair, shrunk shanks, a wrinkled face,
A treble voice, a tott'ring pace,
A sapless trunk, a doting mind,
The witch concluded she should find.

She came, she saw, amaz'd she stood !
Your florid vig'rous health she view'd ;
Your flowing locks, your manhood prime,
Impair'd ?—Oh no ! Improv'd by time ;

Your face (on which her looks were bent)
 That teem'd with soul and sentiment ;
 Your sword, your still more potent lyre,
 Your eyes that genius flash'd and fire ;
 Aye, most your eyes, in which she read
 All there t' admire, and all to dread !

She view'd, and, blest event ! she thought
 How Orpheus sung, Alcides fought ;
 Remember'd how, in luckless hour,
 The heroes each defied her pow'r :
 Yes, singly !—Then what might be done
 By both the champions met in one ?

The fearful image having scann'd,
 Her baneful sheers forsook her hand ;
 Once more she sought the shades of night,
 Tow'r'd hell once more she took her flight.

She finds her sisters, tells her tale ;
 They listen, wonder, and bewail
 Their baffled pow'r ; deep thoughts revolve
 In each, and soon they all resolve
 With skill profound a web to weave,
 And thus their credit lost retrieve ;
 A golden tissue to bestow,
 To gain a friend they fear'd to think a foe *.

I really,

* I have occasionally heightened the colouring, and given a new turn to the conclusion, of this poem. Voltaire adds a dozen lines, in which he weaves another web, of the same stuff, for the feeble and effeminate Louis XV. To this he was induced by his situation at the French court ; and excused, though scarcely justified, by the victories of France in Flanders. Though panegyric, the poem is beautifully animated ; and I could not prevail on myself to spoil the picture, by introducing

I really, sire, should not turn such trifles into rhyme, and should be the very reverse of jocular, had not your letter by cheering me inspired mirth. Fame, who ever keeps a hundred open mouths, and who opens a thousand when she speaks of you, had reported here that your majesty was at the last extremity, and that there were very little hopes. This bad news, sire, would have given you great pleasure, had you seen the manner in which it was received. All was consternation, and you could not have been more regretted in your own kingdom. You would have enjoyed your whole glory; you would have seen the effect which unexampled merit may produce on an affectionate people. You would have felt all the sweets of being beloved by a nation which, in despite of its defects, is perhaps the only dispenser of renown. The English praise none but the English; the Italians are nonentities; the Spaniards have no longer any heroes,

troducing an extraneous and mean addition. However I here add a literal translation of the lines I have omitted in the text.
“ They wove another splendid, golden, and immortal web,
“ for Louis; for you both are friends; you both take cities;
“ you both win battles, fighting against the same enemies;
“ you reign over submissive hearts, one at Berlin, the other
“ at Versailles; both shall one day——But I forbear; it is easy
“ to displease when we say too much. To compare two living
“ heroes, is no trifling task.” T.

nor

nor have they any writers; the monades of Leibnitz, and pre-established harmony, will never immortalize any great men in Germany. You know, sir, I am not prejudiced in favour of my country; but I can venture to assure you it is the only country which erects monuments to the fame of great men who are not its own sons.

For my own part, sir, your danger made me shudder, and cost me many tears. It was M. de Paulmy who informed me that your majesty was in good health, and restored joy to my heart.

I am tempted to believe the pills of Stahl might do good to the king of Prussia. They were invented at Berlin, and have lately almost cured me. If they have in part patched up my feeble frame, what would they not effect on the constitution of a hero?

LETTER CCXIX.

From the King.

April 24, 1747.

THESE shores of Cocytus you really describe
In language so lively, of Fates the whole tribe
You give such a picture, and tempt me so much,
By each bold sweeping stroke and each delicate touch,

That

That I'd take a trip thither, and pay my respect to
Sir Cerb'rus the mild, and sweet madam Alecto,
Did I not remember, so dang'rous the track,
That I never yet met with one soul who came back.
To be wreck'd in an old crazy boat, I must own,
With a pilot so gruff, on a coast so unknown,
Were so odd, that I'll put off the journey, through fear,
For a week—or a month—or perhaps for a year.
Miss Fiction in peaceful possession I leave
Of her kingdom, in which she may young souls receive.
Her subjects I doubt want politeness and breeding;
Unsubstantial I hear is their manner of feeding.
In short, I make over my lands and possessions
To saints, who have claims from their pray'rs, and processions,
Their faith, and their hope, and their washing, and oiling,
To which they're induc'd by the fear of parboiling;
So should any one be dispatch'd by the gout,
And, being anointed, prepare to set out,
Let him come but to me, and I'll freely resign
All the rights and the districts that might have been mine;
Or should some bluff ecclesiastical giant,
A doctor, in argument not over pliant,
A wizard, whose whiff can host infidel kill,
Who can conjure up Beelzebub with a goose quill,
Who professes contempt for the witty and wise,
Who has taken a lodging up stairs in the skies,
Who hereafter will gormandize heavenly dew,
But who now stays his stomach with earthly ragout,
Should he wish for still more of ethereal stuff,
For doctors but seldom suppose they've enough—
Let me but enjoy what on earth may be found,
He shall there have my chattels, goods, cattle, and ground.
Contemning such madmen, I seek to be pleas'd;
And, when by the demon of poetry teiz'd,

Of

Of the streams of Parnassus I sip with delight ;
That is, I take pen, ink, and paper—and write.

But Youth 's on the wane, and impertinent Age
Is beginning to give me the looks of a sage ;
Supposing it granted, as grim-beards have taught,
That wrinkles are always sure signs of deep thought.

Adieu, gentle Pleasures ! Bright Fancy, adieu !
Farewel to thy whims and thy mad merry crew !
For Wisdom, I'm told, in her precepts severe,
Must always like Cato look grave and austere.
Farewel to the Muse too, who, what though a maid,
Of heaven itself, nay of hell, not afraid,
Will rap out an oath with ineffable grace,
.Nor blush though dame Reason stare up in her face.
To thy biforked hill, oh Parnassus, farewell !
For there I'm no longer permitted to dwell :
But ah ! Blest reflection ! though gone, I leave there
Thy fav'rite, defender, and monarch, Voltaire.

I return you a little copper for the pure gold
which you sent me. Nothing certainly can be
superior to your verses : I have seen some ad-
dressed by you to Algarotti, which are charm-
ing ; but those which you have written for me
are still better.

Semiramis arrived at the same time, full of
grand descriptive beauties, and noble passages,
which confirm me in the decided taste I have
for your works. I know not however whether the
spectres and ghosts which you have introduced,
in this piece, will impart all that pathos to it
that you expect. The spirit of the eighteenth
century

century is inclined to the marvellous, when in recital; but there is some danger in putting it in action. I doubt whether the shade of the great Ninus will make proselytes. Those who scarcely believe there is a God must laugh, when they see demons acting their part on the stage.

I perhaps am too adventurous in exposing my doubts, on a subject of which I am no competent judge. Were it some manifesto, some alliance, or some treaty of peace, perhaps I might reason more at my ease, and prattle politics, by which the knavery of men is generally burlesqued into heroism.

I am at present deep in history. I study and write it, yet am more curious to read the histories of others than to conclude my own.

I am better at present. I still preserve my esteem for you, and am ever disposed to receive you with eagerness.

Adieu.

FREDERIC.

Let me beg you to pay my compliments to madame du Chatelet, and to thank her for the part she takes in what relates to me.

L E T.

LETTER CCXX,

From the King.

Potsdam, November 29, 1744

HEADSTRONG, disdainful of the rein,
 To curb thee all attempts are vain ;
 Begone then, Muse, and plead thy cause
 In critic court ; from critic laws
 Thy sentence hear ; thy wares display ;
 Thy pack of portraites straight convey
 To Homer, living now in Gaul ;
 Thy strange exploits, recount them all ;
 Go, croaking fly on raven wing,
 Provoke the nightingale to sing.

Gossip, no airs ; once more, begone !
 What errand ? Oh—I know thou 'st none ;
 Except the fife discordant may
 Excite the trumpet's warlike lay.

Away ! Depose thy cumbrous load
 Of dull Epistle, Tale, and Ode,
 With ev'ry loose and idle chitne
 That has disfigur'd thought for rhyme,
 Before thy sov'reign liege, Voltaire.
 Of blabbing, huskey, too beware !
 Mind ! Not a word of whose they are ! } }

Such is the manner in which I have spoken to my muse, or to my mind ; to which I added some further reflections. Voltaire, said I, is unhappy ; a bookseller, covetous of his works,

or some familiar editor, may happen to steal his box; you, my verses, will have the misfortune to be there, and in your own despite will be obliged to make your appearance in the world.

Feeling however that this reflection was the offspring of vanity, I opined for the departure of the verses; having discovered in reality that such laborious works, instead of being locked up in your box, might better serve to light the pipes of king Stanislaus. Let them be burnt; it is the best death they can expect. A-propos of king Stanislaus, who I think leads a most happy life: report says he fumigates madame du Chatelet, and the gentleman in ordinary of the chamber of Louis XV.; or, in other words, that he cannot live without you both. This is reasonable; this is as it should be. How different is the destiny of men! While Stanislaus is in full enjoyment of every pleasure, I, a poor madman, perhaps accursed of God, am rhyming!

Pass we to subjects more grave. Do you know that I am very seriously angry with you? How can I possibly be otherwise? For—

'Mong all the wits which France can boast,
Of his who merits fame the most
A year is past, I mean an age,
Since verse or prose I've seen a page.

At

At Babylon, 'tis so complain'd,
Semiramis holds him enchain'd.
But ought this new Tisiphone
To make him quit the world, and me ?

Perhaps of Louis now he writes,
And all his mighty deeds recites ?
Tells how the haughty Meuse deplores
Her conquer'd towns, insulted shores.
What then ? Since genius can unbend,
And wisdom can with trifles blend,
Say, why this silence with a friend ?

That Charon had ('twas Envy's boast)
Laid violent hands upon his ghost,
Was said indeed, to take it where
The wife and foolish equal are ;
And whence ne'er yet did ghost escape,
To truly shew the world its shape.

But Rumour could not long conceal
Voltaire was gone to Luneville.
Nay, Rumour says much more than I
Can recollect ; yet let me try—

She says two monarchs pay him court :
The one a king without support,
Without a kingdom ; but the other
Can kingdoms give to son or brother.

These kings I'd join, and add my name,
Could that add aught to Voltaire's fame !
But Modesty forbids the thought ;
Good Sense has wiser maxims taught.

Notwithstanding this silence, I will endeavour
at this distance to excite your ardor to continue
your labours. I will not say—" Valorous son

" of Telamon, rouse up your courage, now
 " when all the leaders your brave companions
 " are disabled, and the fate of Greece depends
 " upon your arm ;" but I will say—Finish your
 History of Louis the Great ; and, having be-
 stowed a Virgil on France, to this glory add
 that of bestowing an Ariosto.

Public report has put me into an ill hu-
 mour. I cannot but think that, not being at
 Paris, you would be quite as well at Berlin as
 at Luneville. If it be possible to enter into
 terms with madame du Chatelet, I propose to
 borrow her Voltaire on hire. We have a huge
 mathematical cyclops*, whom we will barter
 with her for the wit. But let her determine,
 quickly. Should she consent to the exchange,
 there is no time to be lost. Our man has but
 one eye ; and a prodigious curve, which he is
 calculating at present, may make him totally
 blind, before the bargain may be concluded.

Let me know her answer ; and at the same
 time kindly accept the profound salutations
 which my Muse pays to your puissant Genius.

Adieu.

FREDERIC.

* M. Euler. T:

LETTER CCXXI.

From the King.

Potsdam, February 13, 1749.

I HAVE received two of your letters at once with pleasure. Confess that the huge packet of verses, which I sent you, appeared to you to be very ridiculous. It seemed to me as if Thersites were to challenge Achilles to the field. I hoped that to your letters would be added a criticism on my pieces, as was your former custom, when I was an inhabitant of Remusberg, where poor Kayserling, whom I do and ever shall regret, admired you. But Voltaire, become a courtier, can afford nothing but praise. This trade I allow is the least dangerous. Do not however imagine that my poetic fame was offended by your corrections. I am not so foolish as to presume that a German may write good French poetry.

To author who with beauties error blends
The candid critic is the best of friends.
By self-love hoodwink'd, fault we none can find,
Till with her flambeau Truth illume our mind :
And often does the pouring flood of light
With sudden blaze offend our feeble sight.
But soon th' expanding pow'r's new truths explore,
Support the day, and darkness seek no more.

Be

Be kind enough not to spare me. I feel I might do better, but shew me how.

Do you not think that to write poetry well is a progress toward the writing well in prose? Will not the style become more energetic; especially if care be taken not to overload prose with epithets, periphrasis, and poetic turns?

I delight much in philosophy and poetry. When I say philosophy, I do not by that understand either mathematics or metaphysics. The first, though sublime, is not for common intercourse; I abandon it to some poring Englishman: let him govern the heavens as he shall please; I confine myself to the planet of which I am an inhabitant. As for metaphysics, as you have well said, they are air bubbles. When we are adventurous enough to travel into metaphysical countries, we wander among precipices and gulphs. I am persuaded Nature never intended we should divine her secrets, but that we should co-operate in the plan which it was her intention to execute. Let us make the most of life; nor once trouble ourselves whether we are induced to act by resistless impulse, or by conscious freedom.

Did I however dare to venture my opinion on this subject, it seems to me that we are determined by our passions, and by present cir-

Z 2 cumstances.

cumstances. Should you wish to ascend to first causes, I know not what conclusions may be drawn. I know very well it is my will which makes me write rhymes, good or ill; but I know not whether any foreign impulse may act upon my will: I only know that I ought to be angry with it, for not having better inspired me.

Do not be astonished at my Ode on War*. I assure you it contains my real sentiments. Distinguish between the statesman and the philosopher: know that we may make war from reason, may act the politician from duty, and in inclination be still philosophers. Men are seldom stationed according to their choice in the world; this is the reason why we see so many bad coblers, bad priests, bad ministers, and bad princes.

If all things on earth were well manag'd, I ween,
 There would soon be a wonderful change in the scene.
 Your archbishop, properly knowing his place,
 Might wait on his curate, transform'd to his grace:
 Your gen'ral and drummer their titles might barter;
 And your shepherd, then statesman, wear ribband or garter.
 Your eunuch, a hero, disdain might to sing;
 Your king might turn cobler, your cobler turn king.

* This Letter is evidently in answer to Letter CCXVI. which is dated January 1747. One of them is therefore misplaced, but I know not which. The Catiline of Crebillon, which is there mentioned, was first played in 1748. T.

In

In error the world will for ever be ours'd,
And the last man as selfish remain as the first,
Then let us not fear—where's the fool but can tell,
If not how he's ill plac'd, at least how he's well?

A-propos of poetry: you ask what I think of the tragedy of Crebillon. I admire the author of Rhadamistus, of Electra, and of Semiramis, which are perfect in beauty. The Catiline of Crebillon appears to me the Attila of Corneille; with this difference, that the modern is highly superior to his predecessor in his versification. Crebillon seems too much to have disfigured a part of the Roman history, the least circumstances of which are known. Throughout his subject, Crebillon has preserved only the character of Catiline. Cicero, Cato, the Roman republic, and the very plan of the piece, are all so much altered, and even degraded, that we are unacquainted with any thing there except the names. Crebillon for this reason has failed to interest his auditors. Catiline is a mad rascal, whom we wish to see punished; and the senate a collection of knaves, for whom we are very little interested. Rome ought to be painted with sublimity; and the supporters of liberty should be shewn equally generous, sage, and virtuous. The spectators would then become Roman citizens, and with Cicero would have trem-

bled at the audacious enterprizes of Catiline. There is beside no passage in which the plan of the conspiracy is clearly explained : we are ignorant of what is the true design of Catiline ; his conduct seems to me to be that of a drunken man. You must have further remarked that the interlocutors vary at every scene : it should seem that they only come thither that Catiline may change the subject of the dialogue. Lentulus and the ambassadors of the Gauls, who are useless characters, and not even episodical, might be omitted without any alteration. The fourth act is the worst ; it is nothing but irony : and in the fifth act Catiline comes to kill himself in the temple, because the author wanted to conclude. There is no good reason which brings him thither ; and it seems he ought rather to have departed from Rome, as Catiline effectively did.

The beauties of eloquence, and the character of Catiline, are the only things that support the piece on the French theatre. Thus, for example, when Catiline is in love, his love, as that of a conspirator ought to be, is full of ambition :

*C'est l'ouvrage des sens, non le faible de l'ame *.*

How much energy is there in the rapid sketches of the characters of Cicero and Cato !

* It is the work of the senses, not the weakness of the soul.

*Timide, soupçonneux, et prodigue de plaintes, &c. **

In a word, the piece seems to me to be a dialogue divinely versified. Remember, however, that to criticize is easy, but that to write is difficult.

I did not imagine I should see you before this summer. Should it so happen that you were to make a tour hither in the month of July, you would give me great pleasure. I promise you the reading of an epic poem, of about four thousand lines, of which Valori is the hero. Nothing is wanting but that servant girl who kindled those seditious fires in your bosom, which her modesty so efficaciously repressed. I even promise you more complaisant beauties. Come without teeth, without eyes, or legs, if you cannot come otherwise: provided that something which teaches you to think, and inspires you with thoughts so divine, do but accompany you, I shall be satisfied.

I shall willingly accept the fragments of the campaigns of Louis XV.; but I should receive more satisfaction were I to see the conclusion of the Age of Louis XIV. You finish nothing; and this work alone would acquire fame sufficient for any man. You are the only French poet; and

* Timid, suspicious, and prodigal of complaint, &c.

none but Voltaire and Montesquieu can write in prose. Should you divorce yourself from the Muses, who shall hereafter be permitted to write? Or, rather, who will be able to support the reading of a modern work?

Do not therefore pout with the public: do not imitate the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who punishes the crimes of the father on the children, to the fourth generation. The persecution of envy is a tribute which merit pays to the vulgar. Although wretched authors cabal against you, imagine not that nations or posterity can be their dupes. In despite of the lapse of ages, we still admire the masterpieces of Athens and Rome. The cries of Æschines have not obscured the fame of Demosthenes; and, let Lucan say what he will, Cæsar passes and will pass for one of the greatest men the world ever saw. I will pledge myself you shall be a god after your death. Do not however be in haste to deify yourself: be satisfied with having your apotheosis in your pocket, and with being esteemed by all who are superior to envy and prejudice; of the number of whom I entreat you to suppose me.

L E T T E R CCXXII.

From the King.

Potsdam, March 5, 1749.

THE pills for which you have asked are sufficient for the purgation of all France, and enough to kill your three academies. Do not imagine such pills to be sugar plums, for you may happen to be undeceived. I have ordered D'Argens to send you some of these pills, which have acquired so much fame in France, and which the late Stahl caused to be manufactured by his coachman. They are used by nobody here, except by pregnant women. You are really a singular being, to ask physic from me, who have always been an infidel in what relates to medicine.

So credulous! What you! In quacks confide,
 Who gild the pill the poison but to hide?
 Take one step more, and I make little doabt
 But you'll sing mafs, with twang and voice devout.

Exert yourself to effect your own cure. There is no real good in this world, except health; and it is of small consequence whether you recover this health by pills, clysters, or senna. The means

means are indifferent, provided I can but once more have the pleasure of hearing you; for a sight of you is no longer possible; you cannot at present but be totally invisible.

In full defiance of the whole Sorbonne,
This sentiment had all my credence won—
“ That man was matter ; doom’d to vivify
“ By motion ; born to vegetate and die.”
The crude decried opinion now I blame ;
A nobler origin you justly claim :
I did but burrow earthward, like the mole ;
Voltaire is not all body, but all soul.

I send you another epistle, which contains the apology of those poor kings who are the subject of universal censure, while their pretended good fortune is the continual topic of envy. I have three works which I will send you in succession. Rhyming is my recreation. Though I may sin against elocution, you will at least find ideas; and not that fine paralogism, that whipped cream, which abounds in words, void of thought, None but you, who are the Virgils and Horaces of France, are fated to employ a happy choice of harmonious words, and that variety of turn which naturally passes from the serious to the pleasant; or from the flowers of eloquence to produce the fruits of good sense.

We foreigners, who do not give up our claims

to reason, are nevertheless sensible that we never can attain that elegance and purity which the rigorous laws of French poetry demand. Such a study requires the whole man. I am disturbed by a thousand duties, a thousand occupations. I am a galley slave, chained to the state oar; or a pilot, who dares not quit the helm, nor slumber, lest he should undergo the fate of the unfortunate Palinurus. The Muses demand retirement, and a total serenity of mind, which I scarcely ever can enjoy. Often am I interrupted, after having written three lines; my Muse cools, and my mind does not easily recover its ardour and elasticity.

There are certain privileged persons who write poetry in the tumult of courts as easily as in the retreats of Cirey; in the dungeons of the Bastille, or on the travelling matras. I have not the honour to be one of these. My soul resembles the ananas, that flourishes in the hot-house, but that perishes in the open air.

Adieu. Take as much physic as you please, but do not deceive my hopes; come to see me. I promise you a new wreath of our most beautiful laurel, a young virgin for your own use, and rhymes in your praise.

LETTER CCXXIII.

From the King.

April, 1749.

IN prose well turn'd, and delicate,
Politely you insinuate
That, with unfeeling stoic breast,
I'm an automaton at best;
Yet sad Electra claims my tears;
Alive am I to friendship's fears;
Though I'm unmov'd by ghost heroic:
If these are proofs, then I'm a stoic.

Your cardinal Quirini is well worthy of the ages of ghosts and witchcraft. You know your men. You address'd him properly when you told him that, all good catholics being obliged to believe in miracles, the pit was in conscience obliged to tremble in the presence of the ghost of Ninus. I will pledge myself that the librarian of his holiness will very much approve this orthodox doctrine.

For my own part, being no better than an accursed heretic, you will allow me to be of a different opinion, and ingenuously to tell you what I think of your tragedy. Whatever artifice you may employ to conceal the plot of Semiramis, it nevertheless depends on the ghost of Ninus.

This ghost it is that inspires the parricide widow with all the devouring pangs of remorse. This ghost gallantly permits his widow to take a second husband. This ghost, from the depths of the grave, groans in the ears of his son: nay, he does more; he personally comes to terrify the council of the queen, and to astonish the city of Babylon. In fine, he arms his son with a dagger, with which Ninius assassinates his mother.

It is so true that the plot of your play depends wholly on the defunct Ninus that, were it not for the dreams and different appearances of this wandering spirit, the piece could not proceed. Were I to choose a part in the tragedy, it should be that of the ghost: he does every thing. Such is the dictum of criticism.

Admiration adds, with equal sincerity, that the characters are wonderfully well sustained; that truth speaks with the lips of your actors; and that the connection of the scenes is effected with great art. Semiramis inspires terror mingled with pity. The ferocious and artful Assur forms an admirable contrast with the proud and generous Ninus. The first is detested, for which reason he is unnoticed in the catastrophe; for to have brought him forward would have produced no effect. We are interested in behalf of Ninius, but we are astonished at the man-

ner

ner in which he kills his mother. This is the moment when it is necessary that the illusion on the auditor should be the strongest.

We are somewhat vexed to see Azémia bring letters; and that her blunder should be the cause of the catastrophe.

The piece is versified with vigour: the lines appear to me beautiful, harmonious, and worthy of the author of the Henriade. Still I should rather prefer to read this tragedy than to see it performed; because the ghost appears to me laughable; and because to laugh would be contrary to the duty which I have rigorously prescribed to myself; which is, to weep at tragedy, and to laugh at comedy.

Old Plautus and Euripides
Thought such the only means to please :
 To rules like these
The manly pit made Folly bow ;
 The pit is superannuated now.

Shall I add a word more on tragedy? The flow of the strong passions pleases me at the theatre. I find a secret satisfaction, when the author has the power to move and to transport my soul by the force of his illusions; but my delicacy is wounded when the heroic feelings forsake probability. In the playhouse, the machinery of gods and ghosts is unnatural; instead of affecting

fecting it becomes puerile. Were the option mine, I should prefer less of the sublime, and more of the natural. In tragedy, excess of sublimity becomes extravagance. Charles XII. was the only man of this age whose character was theatrical ; but, for the happiness of mankind, men like Charles XII. are rare. There is a play called *Mariamne*, by *Tristan*, which begins with the following line :

*Fanôme injurieux qui troubles mon repos **.

This certainly is not the language of men, but apparently that of the inhabitants of the moon. What I have said of the verse ought to be applied to the action. In order that a tragedy should please me, it is necessary the characters should display passions as they actually exist in choleric and vindictive men ; who ought not to be painted as demons, or as angels, for they are neither ; but their lineaments should be drawn after nature.

Pardon this discussion, my dear Voltaire. I prattle to you like the old woman of Moliere, and give you a picture of the impressions which things make on my ignorant mind.

In the volume which I have just received from you, I found the eulogium which you have

* *Injurious phantom that troublest my repose.*

written

written upon the officers who perished during the late war. The work is worthy of yourself, and I was surprised to perceive we had unintentionally selected the same subject. The regret which the loss of some friends incited in me gave birth to the idea of paying, after their death, a feeble tribute of gratitude; and I composed this short work, in which the heart was more consulted than the understanding. But it is singular that mine should be in verse, and that of the poet in prose. Never was the triumph of Racine more resplendent than when he and Pradon wrote each a tragedy on the same subject. I see how inferior my scribbling is to your eulogium; your prose has taught my verse the language in which it ought to have spoken.

Though of all mortals I am he who least importunes the Gods with my prayers, the first I address to them will be the following :

Ye who of favours have bestow'd
On poets so divine a load,
With one gift more your favours swell;
A little truth, ye Gods, oh let them tell!

Should the Gods deign to hear me, I shall next year see you at Sans-Souci; and should you be disposed to correct bad poetry, you will find whom you have to talk to. *Vale.*

L E T.

L E T T E R CCXXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

Paris, May 15, 1749.

AND am I doom'd to take the pill
From that dear royal hand that late,
With so much scientific skill,
Bled Austria, in despite of Fate ?

Thanks, sire, for this ; and thanks again
For verse which, though severe, you send ;
There 's wormwood in each dose. What then ?
I'll bravely swallow both, and mend.

The God of rhyme, whom you adore
For all the gifts he show's on you,
Old stories tell us, heretofore
Discover'd verse and physic too.

In arts of old renown'd was he,
But war is now his fav'rite theme ;
His, since 'tis yours : you both agree
To reign where Mars was thought supreme.

To make your wit by writing known,
You deem'd but little ; till the sword
Had haughty Austria taught to own,
Wit was a thing, and not a word.

An army and a man of wit !
Combin'd, what can they not achieve ?
For conquest fools were never fit ;
Her garlands we for genius weave.

I imagine your majesty is now at Neiss, or at Glogau, writing some good epigrams against the Russians. I entreat, sire, you will also write some on the month of May, which so ill deserves the name of spring, and in which we have as much cold as in the depth of winter. This month of May appears to me to be the emblem of ill-acquired fame.

Should the pills, with which your majesty has honoured my decayed frame, restore me to some degree of strength, I shall not run after the chambermaids of M. de Valory. I would not travel half a league in search of woman, but would again travel a thousand to pay my court to your majesty. I have however a favour to ask, which you may easily grant; and that is, that you would be pleased to conquer some southern provinces, such as Naples and Sicily; or the kingdom of Grenada and Andalusia: for it would be a pleasant thing to live in those countries, the inhabitants of which are always warm. Your majesty would not fail to visit them annually, like as you do great Glogau; and I should there be a very assiduous courtier. I should converse with you, in prose and rhyme, under the shade of the pomegranate or the orange tree, and you would reanimate my frozen vein. I should scatter flowers over the graves of Keyserling, and the successor
of

of La Croze*, whom your majesty had so happily wrested from the church to attach him to yourself; and like them I should wish to die in your service: for in truth, sire, it is very melancholy to live so long at a distance from Frederic the Great.

L E T T E R CCXXV.

From the King.

May 16, 1749.

YES, this is what may be called writing. I love your frankness: your criticism will afford me more instruction, in two lines, than I should gain from twenty pages of praise.

The verses which you have thought passable were those which cost me the least labour; but when the thought, the cæsura, and the rhyme, are inimical to each other, I then versify ill, and am not fortunate in correcting.

You do not perceive the difficulties I have to surmount, in order to write a few stanzas tolerably; the happy propensity of nature, and an easy and fruitful genius, have rendered you a poet, without any trouble to yourself. I do justice to the inferiority of my talents; I swim on the poetic ocean with reeds and bladders under

* M. Jordan. T.

A a 2

my

my arms. I do not write so well as I think ; my ideas are often stronger than my expressions ; and, in this state of perplexity, I do the least harm I can. I am at present studying your corrections and remarks ; for these may aid me in not being guilty of my former faults. There are still, however, so many shoals to be avoided, that you alone can save me from shipwreck.

Let me entreat you to sacrifice the two promised months to me : do not be weary of instructing me. If the extreme desire I have to learn, and to succeed in an art of which I have always been passionately fond, can be any recompence for your labour, you will certainly have cause to be satisfied.

I love the arts, for the reason which Cicero gives : and I do not rise equal to the sciences, because the belles-lettres are useful in all ages ; and because all the algebra on earth cannot make us other than foolish, when we want abilities to be any thing else. Ten years hence *, perhaps, society may draw some advantage from the curves which the visionary algebraist may have laboriously squared. I congratulate posterity by anticipation ; but, to own the truth, in all such calculations I can discover nothing more than

* I suspect an error of the press, and that it should be ten ages. T.

scientific extravagance. Whatever is not agreeable or useful, is of no worth. With respect to useful things, they are already discovered; and, as to the agreeable, I hope algebra will not be admitted as one of them, by good taste.

I will send you no more either prose or verse. I suppose you will be here at the beginning of July; and I have a poetic packet, or rather corpse, which I shall commit to your dissection. This will be better than to criticise Crebillon, or some other; and you will certainly nowhere find such gross and such numerous mistakes as in my works.

There is nothing but thistles, and not laurels, growing on the banks of the Neva; do not imagine I travel thither in search of happiness. You will here find me a pacific citizen of Sans-Souci, leading the life of a private man and a philosopher.

Should tumult and splendour be your present taste, I advise you not to come here; but, if a mild and uniform life be not displeasing to you, come and fulfil your promise. Send me word precisely on what day you shall depart; and, should the marchioness du Chatelet encourage usury, I imagine I can make conditions with her, by borrowing you on hire, and daily paying

her, at a certain rate of interest, what shall be satisfactory for her poet, her wit, her—— &c.

Adieu. I wait your answer.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCXXVI.

From the King.

June 10, 1749.

NEVER were such charming verses written in return for pills. I do not say this because they praise me, for I know what is the custom between kings and poets; but, myself totally out of the question, I think them delightful.

If purgatives can produce poetry so good, I ought to take a dose of senna myself, that I may see what effects it will operate on me.

What you have supposed to be an epigram happens to be an ode. I send it you, with an epigram against physicians. I have reason to be a little out of temper with their proceedings; I have the gout, and have been in danger of being killed by their sudorifics.

Mark me: I am tainted with the phrenzy of seeing you. Should you not be inclined to indulge

dulge this whim, you would be guilty of treason. I wish to study with you, for I have leisure this year; God knows what I shall have the next. Lest however you should imagine that you are making a voyage to Lapland, I send you a dozen certificates, from which you may learn that this climate is not entirely destitute of mildness.

"The body acts in obedience to the will; "when the soul says, March—it obeys." This is one of your own apothegms, which I am happy to recal to your recollection.

Madame du Chatelet will be brought to bed in the month of September; you are not an old midwife, and she can manage this business without your assistance. Nay, if it must be so, you may at that time be on your return to Paris. Do not forget that the favours which are granted without being forced are done with a better grace, and are more agreeable, than those for which we solicit too much.

Should you think I scold you, remember that is a customary practice with the gouty. You will do as you please, but I shall be no dupe; I shall well perceive whether you really love me, or whether all you have said be nothing more than poetic declamation.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCXXVII.

From the King.

Sans-Souci, July 15, 1749.

THE murd'rous laws of Mars, Belleisle
May teach me ; but, in taste and style,
The fascinating wiles of rhyme,
In language pure, and thoughts sublime,
From you alone let me receive,
Lessons which you alone can give.

I wish for no master but you, in whatever relates to language, taste, and the department of Parnassus. Each man ought to follow his trade. When M. de Belleisle shall busy himself concerning the purity of language, Bruhl shall then read military lessons, and write commentaries on the campaigns of the great Turenne, and I will compose a treatise on the truth of the Christian religion.

The choice which your academy makes of its members really becomes pleasant. These judges of the French language are about to abandon Vaugelas for the breviary, which to foreigners appears rather singular.

Why, sir, your forty are become
Of fanatics a congregation ;
Whence thought and genius are expell'd,
Much to the scandal of the nation.

The

The favour of this parrot race,
By work of wit, whoe'er would earn,
Will miss his road. Would he succeed?
Let him his catechism learn.

As favour'd by the sisters nine,
Among this strange and motley crew,
I know but three whom I can name;
I Richlieu mean, Belleisle, and you.

You, my dear Voltaire, are like bad christians; you put off repentance from day to day. After having given me hopes for the summer, you refer me to the autumn. It should seem that Apollo, as the God of physic, has commanded you to be present at the labour of madame du Chatelet. The sacred name of friendship imposes silence on me, and I satisfy myself with a promise.

I am at present correcting a dozen of epistles which I have written, and some other short pieces, that you may on your arrival not meet with quite so many faults.

You may see from the argument what is the subject of my poem. The main incident is true. D'Arget, at that time secretary to Valory, was carried off by night, by an Austrian partisan, from the next chamber to that in which his master was in bed. The surprise of the Austrian, Franquini, was extreme, when he perceived that

he

he had taken away the secretary, instead of the ambassador. Every thing else in the poem is fiction. I will shew it you here, for it is not proper for publication. Had I the pencil of Raphael or of Rubens, I would try my strength by painting the great actions of great men; but he who only possesses the talents of Calotte can draw nothing but extravagance and caricature.

I have been visited by the hero of France, the Saxon*, the Turenne of the age of Louis XV. and have gained improvement from his discourse; not in the French language, but in the art of war. The marshal is worthy of being professor to all the generals of Europe. He has visited our theatres; and on that occasion informed me you had given the stage a new comedy, and that Nanine had met with much success. I was astonished to learn that some of your works had appeared of the very names of which I was ignorant. I formerly read them in manuscript; at present I hear from others what is said of them, and I receive them after the book-sellers have published a second edition.

I will forget all my griefs, if you will but come hither. If not, beware of an epigram: chance may inspire me with a cutting thought,

* Marshal Saxe. T.

A poet

A poet, no matter how bad a one, is an animal
that ought to be treated with respect.

I wait for the fall of the leaf with as much im-
patience as men look for the blossoms of spring.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCXXVIII.

From the King.

Sans-Souci, August 15, 1749.

SHOULD my verses have contributed to the epistle, which I have just received, I shall regard them as my best work. A person who was present, when this epistle was read, exclaimed, in a kind of ecstasy—" Voltaire and " marshal Saxe were born under the same pla- " net ; they have more vigour in the agonies of " death than others in full health *."

Do but admire, however, the difference between us. You assure me that my verses have excited your poetic ardour, and yours have almost made me forswear poetry. I find I am so ignorant of your language, and have so sterile

* Marshal Saxe was thought to be dying, when he commanded at the battle of Fontenois. T.

an imagination, that I have made a vow to write no more. Unfortunately, you know what poets' vows are; the zephyrs bear them away on their wings, and with them the remembrance of them vanishes.

A Frenchman only, possessed of your talents, can produce harmony from your lyre. I correct, I efface, I interline my vile compositions, to purify them of the numerous faults with which they abound. Musicians, it is said, pass half their lives in stringing their lutes, and play on them the other half. I pass mine in writing, and still more in erasing. Since I have had some glimpse of the certainty of your journey, I redouble my severity on myself.

Be assured you are expected with impatience, and that I shall be delighted to meet with a Virgil who can instruct me like a Quintilian. Lucina is in my opinion very indolent: I wish madame du Chatelet would use greater dispatch, as well as yourself. You think you need but take a single stride, from the baptism at Cirey, and be at mass in our new church. Charity is extinct in Christian hearts: the collections that have been made have not furnished money enough to roof the church; and, unless mass were to be performed in the open air, there are no means to have it performed.

Let

Let me beg you to inform me what road you mean to travel, and when you shall be on our frontiers, that I may supply you with horses. I very well know you are borne by Pegasus; but he knows no other road than that to the temple of Fame. I hope you will arrive there as late as possible; and I assure you that you will be welcomed with as much eagerness as you are waited for with impatience.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCXXIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

Lunéville, August 18, 1749.

I'VE read your lines on parrot race,
And pious crew replete with grace;
Who sermons preach, from wit refrain,
And know each word's weight, to a grain;
Who prizes give for verse and prose;
Who meet to yawn, and part to doze.

Your majesty cannot but think I am more desirous to pay my court to you, than you are to suffer my presence. Believe me, my heart has many a time taken its flight to Berlin, when you have supposed it to be elsewhere. You have
excised

excited the passions of fear, admiration, and interest, among mankind. Permit me to say that I have always taken the liberty to love you, which is seldom said to kings; but this is the strangely familiar manner in which I began with your majesty, and I must end as I began. I have much impatience to read your Lutrin, or your Homeric Batrachomyomachia, on M. de Valory.

Yet our great envoy (though in stature short
 And form rotund, but of majestic port)
 With Prussian valour, Austrian flight—nay, more,
 With battles gain'd, towns storm'd, war's loud uproar,
 And Fred'ric's deeds—methinks might rather seem
 An epic than a mock-heroic theme :
 Or I mistake, or it 's of higher price
 Than are the puny wars of frogs and mice,
 Sung by THE POET of the mighty dead,
 Whose works are always prais'd, but never read.

Speaking of marshals de Belleisle and Saxe, your majesty tells me that each man ought to follow his trade. Truly, sire, you talk thus very much at your ease—you who monopolize so many trades; those of conqueror, politician, legislator, and, what is worse, my trade, which you assuredly practise in the most agreeable manner in the world.

You have induced me to take up this trade again, which I had forsaken. I have the honour

here to send a small attempt toward a new tragedy, the subject of which is Catiline. I inclose the first act, which perhaps has been written with too much haste. I have bestowed eight days only on a subject which Crebillon was eight-and-twenty years in finishing. I did not think myself capable of such astonishing diligence; but I was here without my books. I recollect what your majesty had written concerning the tragedy of my brother poet. You very justly deemed it defective, when you found the Roman History was there so entirely falsified. Catiline, you thought, acted the part of a boisterous lunatic robber; and Cicero that of a weak foolish fellow. I recollect your well-founded remarks. Your polite kindness toward my old brother poet did not prevent you from being rather angry that so deceptive a picture should have been drawn of the Roman republic. I wished to sketch out a painting such as you desired: you have set me to work, and I appoint you the judge of this first act, which is the only one I can at present have the honour to send your majesty; the others are still in the rough. Do you examine whether I have clothed Cicero in his proper robes, or if I have caught the likeness of Cæsar.

Between them judge. Who best deserves applause?
 Ah ! Cæsar, well I know, will gain the cause !
 However just, or little prone to err,
 What most resembles self we most prefer.

I did not send you the comedy of Nanine; for I thought that a bashful maiden, married by her master, was scarcely deserving of being presented to your majesty : but, should such be your commands, I will have the piece transcribed for you. I am now in company with the Roman senate, and endeavouring to merit the suffrage of Frederic the Great.

His servant and admirer true
 Am I, by day and night ;
 But, while I pay all homage due,
 Not once his parasite.

VOLTAIRE.

L E T T E R CCXXX.

From the King.

Potsdam, September 4, 1749.

I HAVE received your Catiline, the conclusion of which it is not possible for me to divine. We are as little able to judge of a tragedy, by a single

single act, as of a picture by a single figure. I will wait till I have seen the whole, before I tell you what I think of the design, the conduct, the probability, the passions, and the pathos.

It does not become me to expose my doubts, before one of the forty judges of the French language, in what relates to elocution. Had my brother in Apollo however, and my fellow-citizen, count Bar, sent the act, I should have asked whether we were allowed to say—

Tyrân par la parole, il faut finir ton règne.

Does not the sense admit of ambiguity? I should imagine the meaning to be, *bis eloquence has rendered him the tyrant of his country, and his reign must end*: but, according to the construction of the line, we Germans, who do not perhaps understand the delicacies of the language, should conceive the poet had said that, *by the aid of words his reign must end*. I am very daring thus to communicate my remarks. Though I have entertained a doubt concerning this verse, this has not prevented me from indulging my admiration at an infinite number of fine passages, at which the reader recollects the touches of the master who produced Brutus, the Death of Cæsar, &c.

Your letter is charming, and such as none
vol. vii. B b but

but yourself can write. France seems in your person condemned to bury ten men of wit, to whom different ages had given birth.

Since madame du Chatelet composes books, I cannot imagine she will suffer herself to be brought to bed by chance. Tell her to use dispatch, for I am in haste to see you. I feel the extreme want I have of you, and the great aid you might be of to me. A passion for study will remain with me through life. In this I think like Cicero, as I have said in one of my Epistles. I may by application acquire every sort of knowledge; to you I shall be indebted for that of the French language. I correct my mistakes, as far as I am able to discover them; but I have no one who is sufficiently a judge, and sufficiently severe, to point out all my faults. In fine, I wait your coming, and am preparing for the reception of the gentleman in ordinary, and the gentleman extraordinary.

It is affirmed at Paris that you will not come; and I affirm you will, for you are no promise-breaker. Should they accuse you of indiscretion, I shall answer—"the thing is possible;" that you cannot resist courtship—"granted;" that you are a male coquet—"agreed." In fine, you resemble the white elephant, for which the king of Persia and the Mogul emperor make war;

war; and the name of which they add to their titles, when they are happy enough to have him in their possession.

Adieu. Should you come hither, you will find my titles run thus—Frederic, by the grace of God, king of Prussia, elector of Brandenburg, possessor of Voltaire, &c. &c.

L E T T E R CCXXXI.

From the King.

November 25, 1749.

I PERCEIVE D'Olivet hurls his thunder at me, and that I am more ignorant than I supposed myself to be. I shall beware how I act the purist, and speak of things I do not understand. My silence must preserve me from the bolts of D'Olivet and Vaugelas.

I shall likewise beware how I send you my works; for, since you suffer your own to be stolen, you may suffer mine to be the same. You labour for fame, and for the honour of your nation. I only spoil paper for my own amusement; and I may deserve pardon, provided I do but burn my works, after having written them. When a man approaches the age of forty, and

B b 2

writes

writes bad verses, he ought to say, like the misanthrope *, " Did I write so ill, I would take care not to shew what I wrote."

We have had a Russian ambassador at Berlin, who, after having studied philosophy twenty years, understands very little of the matter. Count von Keyserling, the person of whom I speak, who is full sixty years of age, has left Berlin, with his fat professor, and is now at Dresden. He still studies, and hopes to be a tolerable scholar some twenty or thirty years hence. I have not his patience, nor do I expect to live so long. Whoever is not a poet at twenty will never become one. I have not presumption enough to flatter myself to the contrary, nor am I blind enough not to do myself justice.

Send me your works, from motives of generosity ; and expect nothing from me but praise. I wish to imitate the prudent silence of Conrad, but this will not render me insensible to the beauties of poetry. I esteem your works the more because I feel the impossibility of equaling them.

Do not trouble me any more concerning *bearsay*—hearsay is the fool's gazette. No one here has spoken ill of you. D'Argens has prattled about Euripides, in I know not what

* Of Moliere. T.

book;

book; but who told you that you were meant? Had his intention been pointed at you, would he not rather have chosen Virgil than Euripides? Every body would have known you by this stroke of art; but, in the passage which you cite to me, I can discover no allusion to the reception you met with here.

Do not conjure up monsters, in order to combat them. Tilt, if tilt you must, with the real enemies which your merit has raised up against you in France; but do not imagine you find them where they are not: or, if you will be intermeddling, do not make me a party. I neither do, nor ever will, interfere in any such things.

I find from all the arrangements which you take how little hope I have to see you. You are not in want of excuses; an imagination like yours is inexhaustible. It is now a tragedy, the success of which you want to see; anon domestic regulations; presently king Stanislaus; and then it is hearsay. In fine, I believe less in this journey than in the arrival of the Messiah, of whom the Jews live in expectation.

An Elegy has appeared here: is it written by you? The following is the first line:

*Un sommeil éternel a donc fermé ces yeux **.

* Eternal sleep has closed those eyes,

Let me beg of you to inform me. I have some doubts on the subject which you alone can remove.

I impatiently wait for the large packet which you announce; and, ungrateful and absent though you be, I admire you still, for this I cannot forbear to do.

Farewell. I am going to see the Agreeable Phrenzy of Orlando, and the Heroic Follies of Coriolanus. I wish you tranquillity, joy, and length of life.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCXXXII.

From the King.

Berlin, January 11, 1750.

YES, I the rhyming novel of Nanine,
Or sentimental comedy, have seen;
And reading fear'd left this reforming age
Had banish'd old Moliere the sinking stage!
Of manners, men, to give the rich repast,
He was the first—beware he's not the last.

Of ev'ry kind and specimen of fool,
By nought distinguish'd but by ridicule,
Of learned ladies and of would-be wits,
Of bigots, misers, lordlings, fops, clowns, cits,
From nature taking comprehensive view,
Each large and comprehensive class he drew.

He

He being gone, who e'er with master hand,
 Like him, could pealing theatres command ?
 To him succeeds a poor and puny race ;
 Of giddy Folly's form too weak to trace
 The changing features, or the rainbow glare,
 Th' absurd, fantastic, pert, affected air ;
 Unlike Moliere, they can't her whims discern,
 Or so pourtray that, while we laugh, we learn.
 Finding to make us smile in vain they try,
 They call Melpomene, to make us cry :
 Not of her bowl and dagger aid they ask ;
 One sock, one unlac'd buskin, half a mask,
 White handkerchief and smelling bottle near,
 Watching her cue to faint, or feign a tear,
 The flattern comes—A queen, that erst gave laws ;
 A pauper now, she begs *some small* applause !
 Our charity call'd forth, we fit the sermon out :
 At church were never people so devout !
 We sit, and while she drawls the lagging lengthen'd
 line
 Responsive yawn, in sympathetic whine,
 “ That's charming ! Yes—I vow that's vastly fine !” }

And is this Comedy ? As soon I'd name
 Religion and Hypocrisy the same !

As you have not been able to make me one
 of the disciples of La Chauffée*, no one ever
 will. Not but I allow you have done every
 thing with Nanine which could have been

* La Chauffée was the most successful of the French au-
 thors in writing what is called *La Comédie Larmoyante*, or
 Sentimental Comedy. T,

hoped. It is a species of writing which never pleased me. I can easily conceive there are many auditors who are better satisfied to listen to the honey of sentiment, than to see the representation of their defects; and who are interested in preferring insipid dialogue to that pleasant satire which attacks bad morals. Nothing is so distressing as not to be allowed to be ridiculous with impunity; but, were this granted, the charming art of Terence and Moliere must be renounced; and the theatre must become the general receptacle of dulness, at which the public must be taught to say, in a hundred different modes, *I love you.* My zeal for good comedy extends so far that I would rather be exhibited, on the stage, than grant my suffrage to the illegitimate and nerveless monster, which the bad taste of the age has brought forth. Since Nanine, I hear nothing more of you: pray afford me some signs of life.

What is your Muse benumb'd, asleep?
Or thro' your veins does winter creep?
Why suffer that fine flame to die,
Which living brighten'd in your eye?

This sacred flame, this spirit, soul,
From jealous Gods Prometheus stole;
Since thus divine its essence, we
Should name it but with bended knee.

I only

I only jest, when I suppose
You might a gift so precious lose ;
That is, it would be my delight
To pique your pride, and make you write.

This is a formal challenge ; and, should not you answer it, you are a proclaimed coward. Wit and verse cost you nothing. Do not imitate the Dutch, who, having the spice all to themselves, will only sell it as a favour. Your predecessor, Horace, sent Mæcenas as many epistles as he desired. Virgil, your great ancestor, did not write epic poems for every body ; but he wrote many eclogues : whereas you, in all the opulence of wit, and possessed of all the most splendid treasures of imagination, are the greatest miser of this wit whom I know. Is it right to be thus sparing of a few superfluous verses for which you are asked ? Take care not to vex me ; my impatience may supply the absence of Apollo, and perhaps I shall write a satire on the misers of mind. But should I receive a charming letter from you, such as you have often written, I will forget all cause of complaint, and will love you much.

Adieu.

L E T .

LETTER CCXXXIII.

From the King.

Potsdam, February 20, 1750.

NIGHT, friend of rest, her poppy dews
 Had o'er my eyelids shed ;
 In heavy sleep so fast I lay,
 The soul seem'd almost fled.

When, ere th' eye twinkles, borne by dreams,
 In fields Elysian I,
 On never-fading flow'rs reclin'd,
 Cæfario did deservy.

With sudden bound, I flew to meet
 The man my heart held dear.

“ Friend of my youth ! My soul ! My life ! ”
 Said I, “ And art thou here ? ”

Thrice in my arms, with eager clasp,
 Would I have presid the shade ;
 Thrice in my arms a cloud I caught,
 That mock'd th' attempts I made.

“ In vain wouldest thou thy friend embrace ;
 “ Alas ! This may not be !
 “ The living we must not approach ;
 “ For such is Fate's decree.

“ But follow, and I'll lead thee where,
 “ In meads and bow'rs renown'd,
 “ The virtuous with immortal wreaths
 “ Immortally are crown'd.”

Thus

Thus spoke the youth, and soon we came
To many a laurel grove ;
Where warriors, victors, I beheld,
And ancient heroes rove.

“ Ah ! Fly th’ assassins, fly,” said he ;
“ The sage, the poet seek,
“ Who not exterminate, but aid,
“ The helpless and the weak.”

He led—to olive groves we came,
Where Homer, Virgil, stood,
With Horace and with Sophocles,
Each shade in angry mood.

With rising wrath, they lift’ning heard
A new-come ghost declare
That all the four had been surpas’d,
Of late, by ~~sac~~ Voltaire !

‘Twas lovely Emily that thus,
With unabated zeal,
Expres’d th’ applause, the truth, and love,
She living knew to feel.

Enrag’d, and still as when on earth
With jealousy possest’d,
They vow’d, by all th’ avenging pow’rs,
Their wrongs should be redress’d.

In hell a hateful harpy sits,
And Envy is her name ;
The sworn and everlasting foe
Of poets, and their fame,

For

For Envy then aloud they call'd :
They call'd—she soon appear'd !
In bitter spleen their message spoke,
In bitter spleen she heard.

“ Begone,” said they, “ in Paris seek
“ This bard ; and be it there,
“ To shed thy venom o'er his works,
“ Thy first and only care.

“ The darkest hearts, the darkest hours,
“ The darkest corners find :
“ Let Folly, Malice, Dulness, Spleen,
“ One common int'rest bind.

“ Raise all Parnassus ! Bid the crew,
“ That scribbling croak in rhyme,
“ Hiss, as they 're wont, with serpent tongue,
“ And make him feel his crime !

“ Eclipse our fame ! Unheard-of guilt !
“ Begone !—By us accurst,
“ Of all the victims we devote,
“ Be his Orestes first !”

With haggard eye and quiv'ring lip,
Attentive to the theme,
The monster heard, the monster fled ;
And with her fled my dream.

Such has been my late dream ; and there was some danger that I should declare myself of the party of those good deceased poets : they had sufficient cause for their ill humour. You strangely abuse your privilege of genius ; you march toward fame by every road that leads thither.

I recol-

I recollect you as I do the conqueror who thought he had done nothing, while any part of the world remained unsubdued. You have lately made an irruption into the states of Moliere ; and, should you be firmly determined, his small kingdom will soon be vanquished. I thank you for your new *Harpagon*, which in my opinion is a comedy that represents the real manners of life. Had it been lengthened, it would have apparently been more interesting.

You see how I spare you ; I do not importune you to come here at present. I wait till Flora shall have embellished these regions, and till Pomona shall come to promise abundance, before I entreat you to undertake the journey. I wish my laurel trees again to bud, that fresh garlands may be entwined for you. Remember that, next to the duke de Richelieu, no one has more incontestable claims over your person than has your Teutonic brother in Apollo. *Vale.*

L E T T E R CCXXXIV.

From the King.

April, 1750.

ONCE more like friend entrusted ? I !
Who dar'd Semiramis decry !
A pagan ! Whom conviction fled,
What though a ghost came from the dead !

On

On genius dar'd in judgment fit,
And rashly sentence pass on wit !
To me ! To me your writings send !
Why then indeed Voltaire 's my friend.
Of past neglect I'll think no more ;
He loves me as he lov'd of yore !

Here have I a letter similar to those I formerly received from Cirey. My desire to see you, to converse of literature, and to inform myself of things which you only can teach me, is redoubled. I thank you for your new edition. As I know all your old epistles by rote, I discovered all the corrections and additions which you have made, and have been delighted with them. They were before beautiful, but you have added new beauties.

You will accustom the pit to whatever you please. Poetry so excellent as yours may, by its delusive charms, blind the auditors to plot and design. I wish to see Orestes, and to know what you have substituted to Palamede ; and likewise to read the other beauties with which you have enriched that tragedy. Did you think of me, you would be polite enough to send the piece. I am prejudiced in your favour, and it depends only on yourself to receive my praise. But who troubles himself, at Paris, whether Vandals and barbarians hiss or clap at Berlin ?

The eulogium on our officers, killed in war, brings to my mind an anecdote of the late Czar

Peter I. who dabbled in pharmacy and physic, the latter of which he sent to his sick courtiers ; and, after having dispatched some Boyards to the next world, he celebrated their obsequies with magnificence, and honoured their funerals with his presence.

With respect to these poor officers, I find myself circumstanced as was the Czar : reasons of state obliged me to expose them to dangers in which they perished. Could I do less than adorn their tombs by epitaphs, at once simple and true ?

Come and correct this morsel, which abounds in errors, and in behalf of which I am more interested than for all my other works. Business will call me into Prussia in the month of June ; but, from the first of July to the month of September, I can dispose of my time. I can study at the feet of Gamaliel.

To me you may the rules impart
Of Livy', Tully', Maro's art ;
Attentive I may then admire
Sweet undulations from your lyre ;
Be taught the path, in heav'nly strains,
That leads to blest Parnassian plaine.
But ah ! Unless you can bestow
The flame that, with celestial glow,
Beams forth in you the blaze of day,
Bedarken'd, I shall lose my way !

How

How can you desire me to determine whether you or madame d'Aiguillon are in the right? If the duchess can produce the original of the Political Testament of cardinal de Richelieu, she must of necessity be believed. Great men are not great at all times, and under all circumstances. A minister collects his whole force, and employs the full sagacity of his mind on an affair which he supposes to be of importance, yet affords marks of much negligence in what he supposes to be of little consequence. When I figure to myself cardinal de Richelieu abasing the grandes of the kingdom, solidly establishing royal authority, supporting the glory of France against potent and foreign nations, extinguishing intestine wars, destroying the sect of the Calvinists, and throwing a mound across the sea for the siege of La Rochelle, I then imagine that firm mind occupied by the greatest projects, capable of the boldest resolutions, and the Political Testament appears to me too puerile to be his work. Perhaps they were merely ideas thrown upon paper; perhaps he did not wish to say all he thought, that he might be the more regretted. Had I lived with the cardinal, I could have spoken more positively; as it is, I can do nothing more than guess.

Of grandeurs and of trifles gay,
 The small things many, few the great,
 The sagest hero lives the prey ;
 And most from Folly holds his state.

Or say he live belov'd awhile,
 Say man and angel should admire ;
 His summer soon shall cease to smile,
 His boasted pow'r shall soon expire.

The clouds of age, when once afloat,
 The brightest genius will eclipse :
 His Testament old Richelieu wrote,
 And Newton his Apocalypse !

My new year's wishes, in behalf of the author
 of the Henriade, are health and patience. If he
 still love me, I shall see him face to face, shall
 admire him at Sans-Souci, and will then say
 more.

L E T T E R CCXXXV.

From the King.

Potsdam, April 25, 1750.

WITH all your wit, and all your grace,
 I own I hop'd to see your face
 Here once again : I hop'd in vain ;
 Our martial ardour you disdain ;
 The trouble you disdain to take
 My dull and slumb'ring Muse to wake.

VOL. VII.

C c

D'Arnaud,

D'Arnaud, whom you will not disown,
Is come to fill the vacant throne ;
Your vassal, pleasing and polite,
From you he learn'd the art to write.
Th' original not to be had,
To get a copy we are glad.

This D'Arnaud, for whom we have been waiting so long, is at length come, and has delivered your letter, with your charming verses, which always put mine to the blush, and which redouble the impatience I have to see you. What is it to me that fate decreed you should be my contemporary, if you prevent my profiting by this advantage?

Horace and Virgil men have read
Some sixteen hundred years or more ;
But living better far than dead
We might their thoughts and hearts explore.

By death or absence sever'd, thus
A substitute man vainly seeks :
The Gallic Homer is to us
As dead as he who sang the Greeks.

All ages shall your works possess ;
They're ours and theirs ; the gen'ral right,
Which never more shall cease, unless
Again should come chaotic night.

For me, I own I wish t' obtain
Not the dead letter, but the soul ;
The works, the mind, the heart, the man ;
Yes, all—I wish to have the whole !

I have

I have this moment received the volume that contains Orestes, a Letter on Falsehood, &c. and another to marshal Schulenburg. You have placed me in the middle of a Letter in which I was surprised to find myself. You know how to give effect to trifles, by your manner of displaying them: I perceive how great a master of eloquence you are. Yes, though eloquence do not, like faith, remove mountains, it lowers the high, raises the weak, and is mistress of nature, especially of the human heart. Oh noble science! Happy are those who possess thee; and especially he who displays thy charms with such superior skill!

I imagined you had long since received the Memoirs of our academy; but they are now binding, and will be immediately sent. Among them you will find some of my works scattered; but I ought to inform you they are nothing more than sketches, in the correction of which I have since employed much time. An edition is at present printing, with augmentations and numerous corrections, which will be more worthy of your attention. This you shall have as soon as the printer shall have done his business. You ask for my poem, but it must not be shewn: D'Arnaud will tell you what are its contents.

The secrets of the bigot's hell,
 And heav'n, I there have dar'd to tell :
 I've jeer'd at Rome, and at the curse
 She bellows forth, to make bad worse.
 But, having been so rash, 'twere right
 To keep such rashness out of sight.
 Of temper caustic, and severe,
 The mocking Muse must not appear
 At Paris, where, with wits and belles,
 The babbler Indiscretion dwells.
 Nay Boyer, there, a wight of note,
 Might her imprudent fallies quote ;
 And, making her his anger feel,
 Might madam send to your Bastille.
 Whereas the wanton hussay, here,
 May frisk, yet harbour no such fear.
 She dungeons hates, and well she may ;
 For she, you know, has had her day ;
 In youth she thither grop'd her way *.
 But so to act, now older grown,
 I think would not be wise, I own.

{}

Therefore, my dear Voltaire, if you wish to see my nonsense, you must come here. You cannot now recede. The poem certainly will not pay for the fatigue of travelling ; but the poet, who loves you, is perhaps worth your trouble. You will here see a philosopher, who has no passion but that of study, and who, by the

* The king, while prince royal, was imprisoned at Custrin by his father. T.

difficulties

difficulties he has himself to encounter, is taught to estimate the merit of those who, like you, march on with such uninterrupted success.

There is a small community here, that erects altars to the invisible Deity. But beware ! Heretics will certainly build altars to Baal, should not the Deity soon appear. I shall say no more.

Adieu,

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCXXXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

Paris, May 20, 1750.

OF Rhapsodies, to all my past,
I now, great monarch, add my last.
Did self-love in my bosom dwell,
Your aspect would the bubble quell ;
For plaudits never can be due,
When plaudits are refus'd by you :
Your approbation e'er must be
The seal of immortality.

A-propos, sire, of immortality—I have the honour to own to you it is a very fine thing, and that it is impossible to speak ill of that which you so well have purchased; but to live two or

three months, in company with your majesty, were better than to live three thousand years, in the memory of man. I know not whether D'Arnaud will be immortal, but I think his short life will be remarkably happy.

Mine depends on a very small thread ; and I should be exceedingly angry were this small thread to be cut, before I again enjoy the consolation of seeing the great man of the age. Your verses on the cardinal de Richelieu have been learnt by rote. How could they be otherwise ?

His Testament old Richelieu wrote,
And Newton his Apocalypse !

They are so natural, so easy, so true, so expressive, so terse, so far from the superfluous, that not to remember them would be impossible. They are already become proverbial. You are certainly the first king of Prussia who have invented proverbs for France. Your majesty will find, in the inclosed Rhapsody, what my reasons are, in opposition to madame d'Aiguillon.

Judge you this Will, since ladies deign
This Will's defence to take in hand :
Two have you judg'd, which I maintain
Were much more hard to understand *.

* Alluding to the wills of the two emperors, and the pragmatic sanction. T.

I must

I must not be indulged, sire, with a sight of your Valoriade. There is an Ode in the collection of your academy, and I have neither the collection nor the Ode. It is well worth while to love you, to be treated thus! I have made a shockingly bad bargain!

To you I bequeath my soul, without restriction.

L E T T E R CCXXXVII.

From the King.

Potsdam, June 26, 1750.

FAIR palfreys? No, vile hacks! Begone!

Chang'd now to nobler things,
Be couriers of Parnassian breed,
And take poetic wings.

Apollo's steeds to you resign
Their office and their claim;
Apollo's brother hither bring;
A God of equal fame.

Let *Paragon* and *Rabican*
Turn pale to see you bound,
From Helicon to see you prance
So lightly o'er the ground.

Oh glorious fate! The God you bring,
In grateful glad surprise,

Will take you from the plough, to place
You in his fav'rite skies !

At you, with telescopic tube,
Astronomers will gaze ;
And break their glasses, or suppose
Some dazzling meteors blaze !

Thus have I addressed the horses, that are to have the honour of bringing you. It is said the German language has been invented to converse with the brute creation ; and, in quality of poet of that language, I have imagined my Muse might with more propriety harangue your post horses than address her rude accents to you,

At present you are armed at all points ; carriage, passport, and every thing necessary, for a man who intends to travel from Paris to Berlin. But I fear lest you should be prodigal of your time at Paris, and a miser of your moments at Berlin. Come therefore immediately, and recollect that a favour granted with a good grace is doubly meritorious.

FREDERIC,

L E T T E R CCXXXVIII.

From the King.

Berlin, August 23, 1750.

I HAVE read the letter which your niece has written to you from Paris: her friendship for you has won my esteem. Were I madame Dennis, I should think like her; but, being what I am, I think otherwise. It would grieve me to the soul, were I the cause of misfortune to my enemy. How then can I wish misfortune to the man whom I love, and who sacrifices to me his country, and every thing which humanity holds most dear? No, my dear Voltaire; could I foresee that your transmigration could in the least turn to your disadvantage, I would be the first to persuade you against it. I would prefer your happiness to the extreme pleasure I should feel at seeing you. But you are a philosopher; I am the same. Can any thing be more natural, more simple, more in the order of things, than that philosophers should be formed for the society of each other; should be united by the same studies, the same inclinations, and a similar mode of thinking; and that they should enjoy this pleasure?

I respect

I respect you as my master in eloquence and knowledge : I love you as a virtuous friend. What slavery, what mishap, what change, what inconstancy of fortune can there be to be feared, in a country in which you are esteemed as much as in your own, and with a friend who possesses a grateful heart ? I have not the foolish presumption to believe that Berlin equals Paris. If wealth, grandeur, and magnificence render a city delightful, we shall yield to Paris. If good taste, perhaps most generally dispersed, can be found in any part of the world, I know and allow it is at Paris. But do not you carry good taste with you, wherever you go ? We have faculties sufficient to applaud you ; and in feeling we will cede to none on earth.

I respected the friendship which united you to madame du Chatelet ; but, next to her, I am one of your oldest friends. What ! Because you leave your country to live in my house, shall it be said that house is become your prison ? What ! Because I am your friend, shall I be your tyrant ? I own this is logic I do not comprehend. I am firmly persuaded you will be very happy here, as long as I shall live ; that you will be regarded as the father of letters, and of men of taste ; and that you will in me find all those consolations

tions which a man of your merit may expect, from another by whom he is esteemed.

Good night.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCXXXIX.

From the King.

1750.

I HAVE just been delivered of six children, who require to be baptised, in the name of Apollo, at the waters of Hippocrene. The Henriade is asked to stand godmother: be so good as to escort her this evening, at five, into the father's apartment. D'Arget-Lucina will be there; and the imagination of Man a Machine* will hold the new-born during the ceremony.

L E T T E R CCXL.

From the King.

1751.

I HAVE read your first article, which is excellent. I suppose you have begun the alphabetic table of the articles, which I think ought

* La Metrie.

to be finished before the work be written, in order to confine yourself to a fixed number of articles, and the most select principles, as well as to avoid entering into minutiae. For, should some articles inferior to the others find their way into the Dictionary, there would be a necessity either of entering more circumstantially into the subject, or of changing the plan, which it seems to me would not correspond to that unity which the writer ought to propose to himself, in a work of this kind.

L E T T E R CCXLI.

From the King.

1751.

IF you continue at this rate, the Dictionary will soon be finished. The article of THE SOUL, which I have received, is well written; and that on BAPTISM exceedingly well. It seems as if chance had started those thoughts in your mind, which however are the consequence of meditation.

When your Dictionary shall be printed, I would not advise you to go to Rome. But of what importance are Rome, his Holiness, the Inquisition,

Inquisition, and all the tonsured chiefs of the religious orders, who will exclaim against you? The work you are writing will be useful in its subject, and agreeable in its style: nothing more is necessary. Should the soul of your nerves remain in a quiescent state, I shall be delighted to see you this evening; if not, I doubt she will revenge on your body the wrong done her by your mind.

I certainly do not believe that I or any one else can be double. Sovereigns speak in the plural, and say *we*; but the word does not multiply the being. Let us lay our hands on our hearts and speak frankly; we then shall candidly confess that thought and motion, which are faculties of our body, are the attributes of an animated machine, formed and organised like man.—Adieu.

L E T T E R CCXLII.

From the King.

1751.

THE gift of song, that art divine,
Nature denied should e'er be mine:
By her when you were thus endow'd,
To me she said, of me not proud—

She

LETTER CCXLIV.

From the King.

Potsdam, February 24, 1752.

I WAS very happy to welcome you here; I esteemed your wit, your talents, and your knowledge; and I had reason to suppose that a man of your age, tired of tilting with authours, and of exposing himself to storms, was come hither to take refuge in a safe harbour. Yet you immediately, in a very singular manner, required me not to suffer Freron to write my intelligence. I had the weakness or the complaisance to comply; though it was not for you to decide whom I should take into my service.

D'Arnaud did you some wrong; he would have been pardoned by a generous man, a vindictive one persecutes those for whom he conceives a hatred. In fine, though D'Arnaud did not injure me, you have been the cause that he has left this place.

You have been with the Russian ambassador, to speak to him of affairs concerning which you ought not to have interfered; and it has been supposed I had commissioned you so to act.

You have been meddling in the busines of madame

madame de Bentink, though this certainly was not in your department.

You have had a most vile transaction with the Jew, and your conduct has been very shocking to the whole city. The business of the Saxon bills is so well known, in Saxony, that very serious complaints have been made to me.

For my own part, I preserved peace in my house, till your arrival; and I must inform you that, if it be your passion to intrigue and cabal, you have done very ill in addressing yourself to me. I love docile and peaceful people, whose conduct does not resemble the violent passions of tragedy. If you can determine to live like a philosopher, I shall be very glad to see you; but if you abandon yourself to every excess of passion, and if you attack every man you meet, you will not afford me any satisfaction by coming here; you may quite as well remain at Berlin.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCXLV.

From the King.

Potsdam, February 28, 1752.

If you wish to come here, you are at liberty to do. I hear nothing of any law-suit, not even
D d

even of yours. Since you have gained your cause, I congratulate you, and am very glad that vile business is over. I hope you will have no more quarrels, either with the Old Testament or the New. Such kind of contests are dishonourable; and, though possessed of the most genius of any man in France, you cannot avoid finally injuring your reputation, by the disgrace of such conduct.

Gosse, a bookseller, an opera fidler, and a Jew jeweller, are really people whose names ought not, on any occasion, to enter into competition with yours. I write this letter with the unpolished good sense of a German, who speaks what he thinks, and does not employ ambiguous terms, or those nervous soothings which do but disfigure truth. It is for you to profit by my frankness.

L E T T E R CCXLVI.

From the King.

1752.

I EXPECTED day after day I should see you arrive, which prevented me from thanking you sooner for the History of Louis XIV. of which I have now four copies. That I might
the

the better pursue the art with which you have made this extract, I am reading the first part, with the commentary of Quincy, that dictionary of battles and sieges. I wait your return to tell you what is my opinion. My impatience induced me to read the second volume at the same time ; and, to own the truth, I think it superior to the first, as well from the nature of the contents as from the style, and that noble daring with which you speak the truth, even of kings. It is a very excellent morsel, and must do high honour to you. The death of madame Henrietta will be the cause that your *Rome Sauvée* will not be played so soon as you imagined.

I have been ill these eight days of a cold in the breast, and of an ebullition of blood ; but my malady is almost cured.

I do nothing but read ; I write no more. When the memory is so bad as mine is, it is necessary occasionally to read over what has before been read, to recollect lost ideas, and learn what is worthy of being remembered. I shall afterward once more begin to correct my own paltry productions. Your fire resembles that of the vestals, and is never extinct ; the little which has fallen to my lot must often be blown up, and is notwithstanding in danger of being smothered by its own embers.

D d 2

Adieu.

Adieu.—Do not suppose there are more oaks than roses in the world. Many are those whom you behold perish, while you continue to bloom; and many more will your name survive, for that will never perish.

L E T T E R CCXLVII.

From the King.

Cosel, September, 1752.

I RECEIVED your philosophic Poem near that Carnuntum in which Marcus Aurelius committed his sage moral reflections to writing; and I did but think your poetry the more beautiful. Some reflections however are to be made; not concerning the poetry, but the subject, and the conduct of the fourth canto; which I shall reserve for our conversation, at my return.

Hussars, engineers, and officers of horse and foot, torment me so much here, that they do not suffer me to recollect myself.

Adieu.—Take pity on a soul in purgatory, which entreats masses may be said that it may soon escape.

L E T -

L E T T E R CCXLVIII.

From the King.

Neiss, September 8, 1752.

THE slave of a rhyme, which my brain could exhaust,
 In turning a couplet my sleep have I lost :
 But I find that the meteor, which troubled my rest,
 Was no more than a will-o'-the-wisp at the best.
 Madam Reason, whose eye, though I own it is clear,
 Has a brow that to me appears somewhat severe,
 Madam Reason has told me, in very plain speech,
 That the heights of Parnassus I never could reach.
 Alas ! Poor self-love ! But no matter ! Henceforth
 Of Voltaire all the genius, the wit, and the worth,
 I will live to admire ; and thus, quitting the field,
 The empire of Homer to his hands I yield.

Such is my determination. Busines and poetry are things of a very opposite nature. The one curbs the imagination ; to extend it is the property of the other. I am between the two, like the ass of Buridan. I have been polishing some stanzas of an old Ode, which is not worth the trouble of being sent to you.

The dear Isaac has travelled a tortoise pace. I believe your fat duke de Chevreuse, who certainly is not as slim as your running footmen, would proceed faster on foot than the sieur Isaac with six horses, coming from Paris to Berlin.

D d 3

But

But this is of little importance ; I am glad to meet him ; we must take men such as we find them. It has pleased Heaven thus to mould up D'Argens, nor is it in his power to remould himself.

I do not send you an account of my occupations, because they consist of things for which you care but little. Camps, soldiers, fortresses, finances, and law-suits, are to be found in all countries ; newspapers are full of such wretched affairs.

I hope to see you on the sixteenth, and I wish you health, tranquillity, and content,

Adieu.

L E T T E R CCXLIX.

From the King.

October 2, 1752*.

HAD I not yesterday had a dreadful colic, accompanied by violent head-achs, I should have thanked you sooner for the new edition of your works, which I have received. I have

* I suspect an error in the date of the year of several of these letters, and that it ought to be 1751, but I want sufficient authorities to obtain certainty. T.

hastily run over the new pieces, which you have inserted; but I was not satisfied with the order in which they are arranged, nor with the size of the edition. It may be called the Canticles of Luther; and, with respect to the pieces, they are all pell mell, and unconnected. I think that, for the convenience of the public, it would be better to increase the number of the volumes, enlarge the type, and arrange the materials in a more consistent manner.

I communicate these remarks because I am well persuaded this will not be the last edition of your works. You will kill all your auditors and your readers with your colics and your faintings; and you will write panegyrics, or satires, on all those in whose company you now live, after our death. Such are the prophecies, not of Nostradamus, but of one who is tolerably acquainted with diseases, and whose profession it is to be acquainted with mankind.

I labour, in my corner, on things inferior in workmanship, and less splendid than those on which you employ yourself; but I am amused, and that is enough. I hope soon to hear that you are cured, and good-humoured.

Adieu.

LETTER CCL.

From the King.

December, 1752.

YOUR effrontery astonishes me. After what you have done, which is as evident as the day, you persist instead of confessing yourself culpable. But do not imagine you can make men believe black is white. When they do not see, it is because they are wilfully blind. Should you push the affair to extremes, I will print every thing ; and the world shall see that, though your works merit statues should be raised to you, your conduct is deserving of chains.

P. S. The editor has been questioned, and has declared every thing.

LETTER CCLI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE,

1753.

CAN what I have read in the gazettes be believed ? Your majesty's name is abused, to poison the poor remains of a life which I had consecrated to you. How ! Am I accused of having

having affirmed that König wrote against your works? Oh, sire, he is as incapable of such an act as I am. Your majesty knows what I wrote to him: I always told you the truth, and the truth will continue to tell, to the last moment of life.

I am in despair that I did not go to Bareuth. A part of my family going to wait for me, at the waters, obliges me to go in search of a cure which nothing but your favours could have effected. I shall ever be tenderly devoted to you, let you act toward me as you please: I never have failed, nor ever will fail, in my respect to you,

I shall return to your feet in the month of October; and, should the wretched adventure of La Beaumelle not be true; if Maupertuis have not in effect betrayed the secrets of your suppers, and have not slandered me to excite La Beaumelle against me; if he have not by his hatred been the cause of my misfortunes, I will confess that I have been deceived, and will ask pardon of him, in presence of your majesty and of the whole world. To act thus will be my glory.

But if the letter of La Beaumelle be true, should the facts be proved, and if I have not taken the part of König except in conjunction with all the men of letters of Europe, let us then examine, sire, how the philosophers Marcus Aurelius

relius and Julian would have acted, in such a case. We are all your servants, and with a word you might have reconciled us all. You were formed to be our judge and not our adversary. Your respectable pen would have been worthily employed in commanding us to forget every thing. My heart is my judge that I should have obeyed you, sire; for this heart still is yours. You know the enthusiasm which brought me to your feet; thither it will bring me again. When I conjured your majesty not to attach me to yourself by pensions, you well knew it was solely to prove I preferred your person to your favours. You commanded me to receive these favours, but I will never more be attached to you except for yourself ; and I solemnly protest, before her royal highness the margravess of Bareuth, through whose hands I take the liberty to send my letter, that I will till death preserve those sentiments which brought me to your feet; when I quitted every thing for you I held most dear, and when you deigned to swear eternal friendship to me.

L E T T E R CCLII.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R E,

October, 1757.

D O not be terrified by the sight of a long letter, which is the only thing by which you can be terrified.

The favours I received when with your majesty are innumerable. I once was yours, and so my heart will ever remain : age has not deprived me of any of my ardour, when you are in question ; though this ardour is diminished on every other subject.

I know not, in my peaceful retreat, whether your majesty have marched to face the detachment of the prince de Soubise, or whether you have signalised yourself by any new success. I am but ill acquainted with the present state of affairs. I perceive that, with the valour of Charles XII. and a much superior mind, you have more enemies to face than he had, when he returned to Stralsund. What is still much more certain is that your fame, hereafter, will much exceed that of Charles : because you have gained as many victories as he did, over more warlike enemies, and have done your subjects all that good which he neglected

to

to do, by giving life to the arts, founding colonies, and embellishing cities.

I do not notice other talents, equally superior and uncommon, which would have been sufficient to have rendered you immortal. Not one of these merits can your greatest enemies deprive you of. Your fame is therefore safe from assault. Perhaps this fame is at this moment increased by some victory ; though it cannot be taken away by any misfortune. Let me conjure you never to lose sight of this idea.

Your happiness is the present question. I shall not now speak of the thirteen cantons. I should yield to the pleasure of telling your majesty how much you are beloved, in the country which I inhabit, but that I must inform you of the numerous partisans you have in France. I know indubitably there are many people who wish that the balance which your victories had established should be maintained. I limit myself to the relation of simple truth, without venturing in any manner to interfere in politics ; they do not appertain to me. Allow me only to think, should fortune be entirely averse to you, that you would find a last resource in France, a nation which is the guarantee of so many treaties. Nor can I but suppose that your knowledge and understanding will keep this in reserve ; that you will still

have sufficient extent of domains to hold a very considerable rank in Europe ; and that the great elector your ancestor was not the less respected for having ceded some of his conquests. Permit me, sire, once again to think thus, while I submit my thoughts to your majesty. Cato and Otho, whose deaths your majesty so much approves, had scarcely any choice, except of servitude or of death. Otho even was not certain he might be suffered to live. He did but, by voluntary death, prevent that which might have been inflicted.

Our manners and your situation are far from requiring you should take any such resolution. In a word, it is highly necessary you should live. You cannot but know how dear your life is to a numerous family, and to all who have the honour to approach you. The affairs of Europe, you are convinced, never can long remain in the same state ; and that it is the duty of a man like you to wait the course of events.

I will be bold enough to say more. Believe me, were your courage to induce you heroically to end your existence, the act would not be applauded : your very partisans would condemn you, and your enemies would triumph. Remember too what the outrages would be which the fanatic nation of bigots would commit on

your

your memory. Such would be all the renown you would acquire by voluntary death. You ought not to afford those cowardly enemies of the human race the pleasure of insulting a name so respectable.

Be not offended at the liberty with which an old man addresses you, who has ever revered and loved you, and whose opinion it is, from long experience, that very great advantages may be acquired from misfortune.

But we fortunately are far from seeing you reduced to extremities so fatal. I expect every thing from your courage and your understanding, except so baneful an act as this same courage has led me to apprehend. It will afford me consolation, when I take leave of life, to think I have left a philosophic king on earth.

L E T T E R CCLIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

October, 1757.

YOUR Epistle from Erfurth is full of admirable and affecting passages. Beauties will ever be discovered in all you do, and in all you write. Permit me to inform you of what I have written

to

to her royal highness, your worthy sister ; which is that the Epistle would incite tears, did you not speak of yourself. But it is not here meant to discuss, with your majesty, what may bring this monument * of a great soul and a great genius to perfection ; the question relates to yourself, and to the interest which all the wise part of mankind, as well as philosophy, attaches to your renown, and your preservation.

You resolve to die—I will not here speak of the painful horror with which such an intention inspires me : but I conjure you at least to suspect little you can perceive, from the eminence on which by rank you are placed, what are the opinions of men, and what is the spirit of the times. As a king, you want such information ; and as a philosopher and a great man, you fix your attention wholly on those examples which the great men of antiquity have afforded. You are enamoured of fame ; and this you think is not to be obtained but by dying in a manner which other men rarely chuse, and which no sovereign of Europe has ever thought on, since the fall of the Roman empire. But alas, sire, while thus enamoured of glory, how can you persist in a project by which it must be lost ? I have already represented to you the grief of your friends, the triumph of your ene-

* Meaning the Epistle. T.

mies,

mies, and the insults of a certain class of men, who will cowardly think it their duty to criminate a generous action.

I here add, for this is the moment to speak without reserve, no one will regard you as the martyr of liberty. We ought not to deceive ourselves. You know the anger with which many courts consider your invasion of Saxony as an infraction of the rights of nations.—What will be said in these courts?—That you have punished yourself for this invasion; and that you were unable to resist the chagrin of not being able to dictate to monarchs. You will be accused of premature despair, when it shall be known that this fatal determination was taken in Erfurth, at this time, when you are master of Silesia and Saxony. Your Epistle from Erfurth will be examined, an injurious criticism of it will be written, and, though unjustly, your name will thus be wronged.

All which I have laid before your majesty is the exact truth; and the man whom I have called the Solomon of the North in his secret thoughts adds much more.

He fears in effect that, should he take this fatal resolution, he will seek an honour which he never can enjoy. He feels a determination not to be humbled by personal enemies; he therefore takes

takes part with gloomy self-love, and encourages despair.

In opposition to these sentiments, listen to your superior reason : by this you will be told you are not humbled, nay that you cannot be : it will inform you that, being but man, let what will happen, there will still remain something ; nay enough to render other men happy—wealth, dignity, and friends. A man, who is but a king, may suppose himself very unfortunate when he loses his domains ; but a philosopher may live without domains.

Once again, without in the least interfering in politics, I cannot believe you will not have sufficient left to remain a considerable monarch. Should you think proper to contemn all human grandeur, as did Charles V. queen Christina, king Casimir, and many others, you will support this character better than any of them ; and instead of the loss of, it would to you be additional grandeur. In fine, any resolution would be proper except the odious and deplorable one which you have taken. Was it worth the trouble you took to become a philosopher, if you could not learn to live like a private man ? Or, though a king, if you could not support adversity ?

In all I have said, I have no other interest than that of the public good, and of your majesty.

I shall soon enter my sixty-fifth year : I was born infirm : I have but a moment to live. I have been unhappy ; this you know : but I shall die the reverse, if I can but leave you on earth, putting that doctrine in practice which you have so frequently written.

L E T T E R CCLIV.

From the King.

October 9, 1757.

MAN was I born, and therefore must oppose
My fortitude to man's eternal foes.

Yet, though these are my sentiments, I am far from condemning those of Otho and Cato. The only great moment in the life of the latter was that which immediately preceded his death.

Were I Voltaire, a private man,
Concentrate in my narrow plan,
The storms of fate I'd laughing view,
And think, and speak, and act, like you.
How worthless crowns and grandeurs are ;
How vile is Flattery's crouching care ;
How insignificant, how vain,
Is Pomp, with all her yawning train ;
How poor a thing is Fame, that's read
In history when the hero's dead ;
Of how much higher actual worth
A moment's bliss, bestow'd on earth,

To

To ev'ry breath Renown can blow;
All this, alas! and more I know.

Who then would envy kings, or trace
In them of heav'n the chosen race?
Or when, with light unburthen'd heart,
Came peaceful Pleasure, void of art,
Of affection, rancour, guile,
On care-fraught majesty to smile?

No; ne'er did Fortune's frown, unblest,
Or Fortune's fawning, break my rest;
Not her caprice can wound my pride:
Far diff'rent rules I make my guide!
Each man, however wise or brave,
Of circumstances is the slave;
By leading these, himself though led,
He proof affords of heart and head.
Were I Voltaire, once more I say,
In sylvan shades I'd sing and play,
Among a simple honest race,
In whom the golden age we trace:
But, being what I am, 'twere fit,
Though on the rocks the vessel split,
Though howling storms destruction wing,
To act, and think, and live, and die a king.

L E T T E R CCLV.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R E,

November 13, 1757.

Y OUR epistle to D'Argens made me tremble; but that with which your majesty has

E e 2

honoured

honoured me has restored my courage. You seem to take a formal and mournful adieu, and determine to hasten your own death; and this determination not only led a heart like mine to despair, a heart which you never have sufficiently searched, and which has ever been attached to you, under all circumstances, but my affliction was increased, by recollecting the unjust accusations which a part of mankind would have brought against your majesty.

I yield the palm to your four last lines, which are as admirable from their meaning as from the circumstances under which they have been written:

But, being what I am, 'twere fit,
Though on the rocks the vessel split,
Though howling storms destruction wing,
To act, and think, and live, and die a king.

These sentiments are worthy of your mind; and the only meaning which I can discover in them is that you will, with your accustomed valour, defend yourself to the last extremity. One of the proofs of this valour, which rises superior to all accidents, is that of being able to write good poetry, at a crisis when any other man would scarcely be able to write a few lines in prose. I appeal to yourself whether this demonstration of the superiority of your soul must not inspire a wish that you should live. For my own

own part, I want the courage to write in verse to your majesty, remembering as I do your present situation ; but permit me fully to tell you my thoughts.

In the first place, be certain you are now in possession of more fame than you ever have been. All military men, from all parts, give it as their opinion that you behaved, at the battle of the 18th, like the prince of Condé at Séneff ; and that in every other respect you have acted like Turenne. Grotius has said—“ I can suffer calumny and poverty ; but I cannot exist under the assaults of calumny, poverty, and ignominy united.” You, in your reverse of fortune, are crowned with glory, and still possess great domains. Winter is coming, and the face of affairs may change.

Your majesty knows that more than one man of consequence thinks a balance of power is necessary, and that the politics which tend to effect the contrary are detestable. Such are the very words of certain persons.

I will venture to add that Charles XII. who possessed your courage, but wanted your information, as well as your compassion for the suffering people, made peace with the czar without self degradation. It would be unbecoming in me

to say more, though your superior penetration will supply every thing I have omitted.

It is my duty to do no more than to represent to your majesty how necessary your life is to your family, to your remaining provinces, and to philosophers, whom you may enlighten and support; and who, believe me, would find it exceedingly difficult to justify to the world a voluntary death, against which universal prejudice would loudly proclaim. I must further acknowledge that, act as you will, you cannot but act greatly.

From this my distant retreat I find myself more interested in your fate than I was at Potsdam and Sans-Souci. My retreat would be happy, and my infirm old age comforted, could I be certain of your life, which your returning bounty renders additionally dear to me.

I am informed that his royal highness the prince of Prussia is very ill: this is an increase of affliction, and a new reason why you should take care of yourself. I will allow that a momentary existence in scenes of affliction, and between two eternities which engulf us, is a mere trifle: but to bear the burthen of life is well worthy of your great fortitude; and to support adversity like a hero is to be truly a king.

L E T T E R CCLVI.

From the King.

Breslau, January 16, 1758.

I HAVE received your letter dated the 22d of November, and your other of the 2d of January, on the same day*. I scarcely had time to write in prose, much less in verse, in reply. I thank you for the part which you take in the fortunate chances by which I have been seconded, at the close of a campaign when all seemed lost. Live happy and peaceably at Geneva; to him who does not so live the world is a cypher; and pray that the inflammatory heroic fever of Europe may soon be cured, that the triumvirate may be ruined, and that the tyrants of the earth may make no use of those chains which they have forged for its slavery.

FREDERIC.

I am not ill, either in body or mind, but I am taking some rest in my chamber. This is what has given birth to the rumours which my enemies have spread. I may however answer them as

* Neither of these letters, say the Basil editors, are to be found. They add that many others are wanting. T.

Demosthenes did the Athenians—" Well, if
 " Philip were dead, what then ? Oh Athenians !
 " You then would soon raise up another Philip!"

Oh Austrians ! Your ambition, and your de-
 sire of univerfal dominion, would soon raise
 you up other enemies ; and the freedom of
 Germany, and that of Europe, would never
 want defenders !

LETTER CCLVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

April 15, 1758.

GREAT master of the sword and quill,
 Since you delight to rhyme and kill,
 Go on ! To verse and war give birth ;
 Instruct at once and ravage earth !
 The verse I love, the war I hate,
 But I submit to you and Fate ;
 For opposition were but vain,
 Your character you must sustain.
 Yet sure 'tis worth our while to note
 What contrats like to these promote ;
 And how you got, with so much-ease,
 The double art to kill and please.

Recollect the person however who, on a
 former occasion, said—

*Et quelque admirateur d'Alexandre et d'Alcide,
J'eusse aimé mieux choisir les vertus d'Aristide*.*

This Aristides was a good man : he would not have proposed to make the archbishop of Mentz pay all expences and damages sustained by some poor ruined Greek town. It is evident that your majesty has incurred the censures of Rome, by your pleasant scheme of making the church pay for the crockery which you have broken. To screen you from excommunication-major, I, like a good citizen, have advised you to pay yourself. I recollect that your majesty has often told me the people of ——† were fools. Really, sire, you are very good, to wish to reign over such people. I imagine my proposal very favourable to you, when I request you to suffer them to be governed by whom they please.

I thought, sire, you, being much inclin'd
To laugh, while drubbing poor mankind,
O'er men of wit lov'd most to reign,
If so, why not old Rome regain ?

As I am exceedingly vexed to pay three twentieths of my effects, and to ruin myself

* Though I admire Alexander and Hercules, I should prefer the virtues of Aristides.—Voltaire repeatedly quotes these lines, to remind the king of his own decision in favour of justice. T.

† The word Westphalia, I imagine, is omitted.

T.
that

that I may have the honour of making war on you, perhaps you will suspect that, when I propose peace, it is from motives of cunning: but no, not in the least; it is only that you may not run the daily risk of being killed by croats, hussars, and other barbarians, who are wholly unacquainted with what is a beautiful line in poetry.

Your ministers at Breda have no doubt views superior to mine. Neither the duke de Choiseul, prince Kaunitz, nor Mr. Pitt, have revealed their secret to me; it is said to be known only to one M. de Saint-Germain, who formerly supped in the city of Trent with the fathers of the council, and who will probably have the honour to be acquainted with your majesty some fifty years hence. This man is one who never dies, and who knows all things. For my part, being ready to take my leave, knowing nothing, my only wish is that your majesty were acquainted with the duke de Choiseul.

Your majesty writes me word you will endeavour to become a good-for-nothing fellow. This is excellent intelligence indeed! But pray what are you masters of mankind? I have seen you entertain great affection for those good-for-nothing fellows Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and Julian. Continue to resemble them, but do not

by your jokes embroil me with the duke de Choiseul.

On which I present my respects to your majesty, and very civilly pray the Deity to bestow peace on his earthly images.

L E T T E R CCLVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

May 2, 1752.

YES, northern hero, well I knew
Of Frenchmen's backs you had full view :
You bled them with your Prussian leeches ;
You cut the waistbands of their breeches :
But that you would, of what you saw,
Immortal comic sketches draw,
A favour was too singular
For them to dream you would confer !
The fops, howe'er, are taught to know,
By this, their many-gifted foe.

At present, rhimes, in *ox or is*,
But little exercise your wit ;
Mars raging now with fearful ire,
Has broken poor Apollo's lyre !
In winter, Horace, and his friends,
Find at your court a large amends :
Of war, in spring, your mind is full :
Thus are your moments never dull.

I know

I know nothing so pleasant, sir, as the leave of absence* which you granted on the 6th of November, 1757. Yet it seems to me that, in this very month of November, you galloped full speed to Breslau, and that you merely singed our whiskers on your march. The most excellent sentence of the parliament of Paris pronounced against the Philosophy of Good Sense, by D'Argens†, and *La Loi Naturelle* (Natural Law) might very well find a place in the History of *Les Culs*; but it ought to be in the divine chapter of *Les Torche-culs* of Gargantua. The work of these gentlemen is well worthy of being consigned to the water-closet: and indeed it is nearly thus that the impertinent remonstrances, made by the parliament, have been treated at court. Its members never can be reproached with possessing “The Philosophy of Good Sense.”

Paris it is said is more mad than ever; though not possessed by that kind of madness which genius sometimes authorises, but by a species of phrenzy that greatly resembles folly.

* Meaning the battle of Rosbach. T.

† A work by the marquis d'Argens, intitled *La Philosophie du bon Sens*, was condemned by the parliament, nearly about the same time as was the poem of M. de Voltaire, on *La Loi Naturelle*.

But

But I will not myself be guilty of the folly of longer intruding upon your majesty's time ; for I should rob the Austrians, to whom it is consecrated. I continually pray that the philosophy of good sense may grant you peace, and that *its kingdom may come.* For, to speak truth, amid such multiplied massacres, this is the *kingdom of Satan* : and the philosophers who affirm that “whatever is right,” know very little of the matter. All will be right, when you will return to Sans-Souci, and there say—

*Alors, cher Cineas, victorieux, contents,
Nous pouvons rire à l'aise et prendre du bon temps*.*

L E T T E R CCLIX.

From the King.

Ramenau, September 28, 1758.

I AM very much obliged to the hermit of the *Délices*† for the part which he takes in the adventures of the Don Quixote of the north. This Don Quixote lives the life of a strong

* Now, dear Cineas, victorious and happy, we may laugh at our ease, and take our pleasure.

† So Voltaire called his place of residence. T. player,

player, who sometimes plays on one stage and sometimes on another, is occasionally hissed and occasionally applauded. The last piece in which he played was the Thebaid, and scarcely was so much as the candle-snuffer left alive *. I know not what will be the result of all this ; but I am of opinion, with our good Epicureans, that the auditors are more fortunate than those who make their appearance on the stage.

Though I am here and there and everywhere, I occasionally hear of what is passing in the republic of letters ; and the babler with a hundred tongues is wholly silent, concerning you. I have a great inclination to shout in your ear—Brutus, thou sleepest ! Three years have passed since we have had any new editions of your works. What are you doing ? If you have written any thing new, let me beg you to send it me.

I wish you all the tranquillity and peace of which I myself am in want.

Adieu.

FREDERIC.

* Statius tells us that but one of the heroes who went to the siege of Thebes returned alive. T.

L E T-

L E T T E R CCLX.

From the King.

October 6, 1758.

Y
O
U may easily judge what my affliction must be, from the ills which I have sustained. There are misfortunes which courage and perseverance may repair; but there are others against which all the fortitude with which we can arm ourselves, and all the apothegms of philosophers, afford but vain and ineffectual aid. Such are those with which my unfortunate star overwhelms me, in the most embarrassed and busy moments of my life.

I have not, as you have been informed, been ill; my only disease consists in hemorrhoidal and sometimes nephritic colics. Did it depend on myself, I would fall the voluntary victim of death, which soon or late these kind of maladies occasion, could I by that have prolonged the life of her who will no more see the light of day *. Do not forget her, but let me entreat you to collect all your powers, to raise a monument to her honour. You need only do her justice; for, without the

* The margraves of Bareith.

least

least departure from truth, you will find materials the most ample, and the most dignified.

I wish you more peace and happiness than I myself possess.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCLXI.

From M. de Voltaire.

On the Death of her Royal Highness the Margravess of
Bareith.

December, 1758.

ILLUSTRIOUS shade! Of woe the general theme!
For thee when shall our sorrows cease to stream?
Yet say, rememb'ring how thou didst expire,
Must we bewail thee most, or most admire?

Thine virtue, genius were; their laws thy guides;
In wisdom hast thou liv'd, in wisdom died!
Slow was thy death; yet fear didst thou disclose
No more than in the battle's heat thy brother knows.

Devoid of prejudice, nor e'er beguil'd
By Superstition, old Imposture's child,
Tortur'd thou never wert by terrors mean,
Of tyrant gods, or ghosts of bigot-spleen.

But other tortures, ministers of death,
Languors that watch t' imbibe the vital breath,
Resign'd, endure thou didst, as each took birth;
Lamenting only those that ravaged earth.

Oh!

Oh ! At this moment, how would earth rejoice,
 Had Vengeance and false Int'rest heard thy voice !
 Of balmy Peace what blessings should we know !
 Of blood what torrents would have eas'd to flow !

Thy brother now, in dignified repose,
 From cares reliev'd, believ'd from hosts of foes,
 Hero and sage, from meaner troubles free,
 Would know no grief, but that of losing thee !

From Victory's car he'd bid the lily bloom,
 And plant the cypress round thy hallow'd tomb :
 While Fame should add her wreath, and join with Peace
 To soothe his grief, and bid affliction cease.

Thy wondrous friendship now should swell his lays ;
 Berlin should echo back the plaintive praise :
 For not to me does praise like thine belong ;
 'Tis his t' immortalize thy name in song.

The above, sire, was what my grief dictated, some time after the astonishment of affliction with which I was overwhelmed by the death of my protectress, had in part ceased. Since such are your majesty's commands, I send you these verses. I am old, as will be evidently seen ; but the heart, which will ever be yours and the adorable sister's for whom you grieve, will never grow old.

I could not, in these feeble lines, but recollect the efforts which this worthy princess made, to restore peace to Europe. All her letters, as you certainly know, passed through my hands. The

minister*, who was himself of her opinion, but who was obliged to reply by a letter dictated to him, is dead of grief. Now, in my old age, and overburthened by infirmities, I see with pain all that is passing; but I console myself in the hope that you will be as fortunate as you deserve to be.

The physician Tronchin says that your hemorrhoidal colic is not dangerous; but he fears lest so many labours should affect the state of your blood. This man is certainly the greatest physician in Europe, and the only one acquainted with nature. He assured me that remedies might be applied for the effectual recovery of your august sister, six months previous to her death. I did all in my power to induce her to commit herself to the care of Tronchin; but she confided in ignorant obstinacy; and Tronchin announced her death to me two months before the fatal moment. Never did I feel despair more sensibly. She has fallen the victim of the self-sufficiency of those who undertook her cure.

Be careful of yourself, sire, for you are necessary to mankind.

* Cardinal de Tencin. The abbé de Bernis obliged him to sign a letter, which he sent him, to break off all negotiation.

L E T T E R CCLXII.

From the King.

Breslau, January 2, 1759.

I DO not merit all the praises you bestow on me. We have escaped from danger by *an almost*: but, considering the multitudes whom we have to oppose, to do more were next to impossible. We have been vanquished, and like Francis I. we have said—"All is lost except "our honour."

You have great reason to regret marshal Keith, whose loss will be felt by the army and by private society. Daun takes advantage of the darkness of night, during which little is left for courage to perform. Yet are we on our legs, and are preparing again to advance.

Perhaps the Turk, more christian-like than the catholic apostolic powers, will not suffer political banditti to give themselves airs, and to conspire against a prince whom they have offended, and by whom they were not molested.

Live happily, and pray to God for the unfortunate, the apparently damned, for they are obliged continually to be at warfare. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

F f 2

LETTER CCLXIII.

From the King.

Breslau, January 23, 1759.

I HAVE received the verses you have written. It should seem I did not explain myself sufficiently. I wish for some more splendid and public testimony. All Europe should be taught to weep, with me, for virtue too little known. My name must not have any participation in the eulogium; the world must be told that she was worthy of immortality, which it is for you to bestow. It has been said that Apelles only was worthy to paint Alexander; and I believe your pen alone is worthy of rendering this service to her who will remain the eternal subject of my tears. I inclose some poetry, written in a camp, and which I sent to her a month before that cruel catastrophe which has deprived us of her everlastingly. The verses are certainly not worthy of her, but they at least bear the true impression of feeling. In a word, I shall not die satisfied, till you shall first have surpassed yourself in the acquittal of this mournful duty, which I require you to perform.

Pray for peace; but, even should victory bring
peace,

peace, neither peace nor victory, nor all the universe contains, could ever alleviate the cruel sorrows which consume me.

Live you more happily, at Lausanne, and render yourself worthy that I should wholly forget the past.

F R E D E R I C.

L E T T E R CCLXIV.

From the King.

Breslau, March 2, 1759.

YOUR letter contains an express contradiction in words and things. You affirm your imagination is fled, yet at the same time your whole Epistle abounds in fancy. You ought to have been more on your guard, in writing to me, and to have suppressed the fine fire with which at the age of sixty-five you are still animated. I much fear lest it should be with you as with the majority of mankind, whose thoughts are all fixed on the future, and who forget the past.

The human mind, on sordid int'rest bent,
On virtue dead no longer is intent.

My poetry is not written for the public. I have neither imagination enough, nor am I

sufficiently acquainted with the language, to write good poetry ; and mediocrity in thyme is detestable. All that can be said is that it is sufferable among friends. I send you verses of various kinds, but which all taste of the same soil, and partake of the times in which they were written. As you are, at present, a rich and potent lord, I have no fear of making you pay dearly for the postage of my nonsense. I send you by the same post all the wretched stuff by the writing of which I have at intervals amused myself.

I now come to the article which seems most to affect you ; and I give you every assurance to think no more of the past, and to grant you satisfaction. But first let a man die in peace whom you have cruelly persecuted *, and who, according to every appearance, has but a short time to live.

With respect to what I have requested of you, I still have it very much at heart ; be it in prose or be it in verse ; each is to me indifferent. Such a tribute is necessary, to eternize virtue so pure and so uncommon, and which has not been generally enough known. Were I persuaded I could write well, I would not commit the task to any one ; but, as you are certainly the first

* Maupertuis.

man

man of our age, I can only address myself to you.

I am again on the point of recommencing my cursed erratic life. It often happens that I receive letters from Berlin dated six months back, I therefore do not expect immediately to receive your answer; but I hope you will not forget a work which, on your part, will but be an act of gratitude.

Adieu.

F R E D E R I C.

L E T T E R CCLXV.

From the King.

Breslau, March 12, 1759.

IT must be confessed that your months do not resemble the weeks of the prophet Daniel; his weeks are ages, and your months are days.

I have received the Ode, which has cost you so little, which is very beautiful, and which certainly will not do you dishonour. This is the first moment of consolation I have for five months enjoyed. Let me entreat you to have it printed, and to disperse it through the four quarters of the world. It shall not be long before I will testify my gratitude to you.

F f 4

I send

I send you an old Epistle, which I wrote a year ago ; but, as you are mentioned in it, it is for you to defend yourself, if you think yourself able so to do. The verses themselves are bad, but I am persuaded that what they affirm is truth: such at least is my opinion.

The older we grow the more are we persuaded that his sacred majesty Chance does three-fourths of the work of this wretched world ; and that those who think themselves the wisest are the greatest lunatics, among the unfeathered species of bipeds, of which we have the honour to be a part.

I may in conscience be pardoned solecisms, and bad poetry, made in the midst of tumult, cares, and perplexities, by which I am incessantly surrounded.

You wish to be informed of what Néaulme is printing ; and this information you require from me, who know not whether Néaulme be still in existence, who have not for almost these three years set foot in Berlin, and whose only intelligence comes from Fermor, Daun, Soubise, Lautrichaussen, and a class of men concerning whom you trouble yourself very little ; and concerning whom, likewise, I should be very glad not to trouble myself at all.

Adieu. Live happily, and preserve peace in
your

your Swiss Signiory; for the wars of the pen and of the sword are but seldom successful.

I know not what will be my destiny this year; but, in case of misfortune, I recommend myself to your prayers, and request a mass from you, to relieve my soul from purgatory; should there any purgatory be found, in the other world, worse than the life I lead in this.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCLXVI.

From the King.

Breslau, March 21, 1759.

Y O U have not been entirely mistaken; I am on the point of marching; and though not to lay siege, I am on the march to resist my persecutors.

I have been delighted with the corrections and additions which you have made, in and to your Ode. Nothing gives me more pleasure than whatever relates to this subject. The new stanzas are very beautiful, and I ardently wish that the whole were already printed. You may add a letter to it, if such be your good pleasure; and, though I am exceedingly indifferent concerning what may be said of me in France, and elsewhere,

elsewhere, no one will vex me by attributing my History of Brandenburg to you. This is to suppose it exceedingly well written, and rather to praise me than to blame.

Amid the tumultuous troubles in which I am about to engage, I shall not have time to enquire what libels may be written against me in Europe, or whether I shall be calumniated; but I shall always be convinced, and shall remain a proof of the fact, that my enemies have made great efforts to overwhelm me. I know not whether the object be worth the trouble.

I wish you that tranquillity and peace which I shall never enjoy, while thus unremittingly persecuted by Europe.

Adieu.

FREDERIC.

P. S. You have spoken so much to me of the physician, Tronchin, that I beg you would consult him, relative to the health of my brother Ferdinand, which is in a very bad state. In the course of last year he had two inflammatory fevers, which had left him in a state of great weakness. To this are added the symptoms of night sweats, with a cough and a discharge from the lungs. The physicians here believe an abscess is formed in the lungs; and, having seen myself so many similar cases, which always have proved fatal to

the

the patient, my fears for his life are very great. Not that I think death very near ; but I dread a decline, which with the fall of the leaf will bring him to the grave. I think it my duty to neglect nothing, and to try what aid art can afford ; though I have but little confidence in physicians.

I request you would consult Tronchin, to know what are his thoughts, and whether he imagines my brother may be saved. I ought to add, for the information of the physician, that his urine is very red and highly coloured ; that the expectorated pus has a bad smell ; that his weakness is great, his dejection considerable, and that he has every symptom of a slow fever, which however does not make its appearance by day, during which the pulse is feeble. May he entertain better hopes of the case than I do !

L E T T E R CCLXVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R E,

Aux Délices, March 27, 1759.

I RECEIVED the letter with which your majesty honoured me, written on the second of March in the hand of your secretary, my Swiss countryman, and signed Frederic. From this

this it appears your majesty had not then received the small monument which you required me, with feeble hands, to raise to your adorable sister. I therefore here send another copy, which I commit to chance, recommending it to God, to the hussars, and to those curious persons who open letters. Your packet, which I have received with your letter, contained your Ode to prince Henry, your Epistle to the lord marshal, and your Ode to prince Ferdinand. There is one passage in that Ode of which you alone could be the author. It is not sufficient to be in possession of genius to write thus, but it is further necessary to be at the head of a hundred and fifty thousand men.

Your majesty tells me, in your letter, that it appears I am only desirous of the baubles which you do me the honour to mention to me. True it is, after an attachment of more than twenty years, you ought to have forborne to have taken from me things which have no other value, in my estimation, than that which they acquired from the hand by which they were bestowed. I could not even wear such marks of my ancient devotedness to you, during the war : my lands are in France, though they are situated on the frontiers of Swisserland ; they are entirely free ; neither do I pay any thing to France ; still they are

are in the French dominions. I have rents in France to the amount of sixty thousand livres (two thousand five hundred pounds sterling) and my sovereign has, by brevet, continued me in the place of gentleman in ordinary of his chamber. I wish your majesty to be firmly persuaded that the proofs of bounty, and justice, which you wish to afford me, will no otherwise affect me than because I have always regarded you as a great man : me you have never known.

I do not in any manner request the trifles which you suppose I so much desire to possess. I will have none of them : I wish only for your good opinion. When I told you it was my desire to live and die with you, I told you nothing but the truth.

Your majesty treats me like the rest of the world. You laugh at me when you say the president is dying. He has just had a law-suit with a girl, who wished to be paid for a child which he manufactured for her. Would to the Lord I might have a similar suit! But I am far from incurring any such risk. I have been very ill, and am very old : that I am very rich, very independent, and very happy, I confess ; but you are wanting to my happiness, and I shall soon die without having seen you. For this you trouble yourself but little, and I endeavour to follow
your

your example. I love your verse, your prose, your wit, and your bold and firm philosophy. I have neither been able to live without you nor with you. I do not address myself to the hero and the king; it is for monarchs so to address you; but I converse with a man who enraptured me, whom I have loved, and with whom I continue to be angry.

LETTER CCLXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

March 30, 1759.

THOUGH the whole world be in arms and in alarms, I have notwithstanding received all your majesty's packets. The Epistle to her Beatitude, the abbes of Quedlimburg, on his most sacred majesty Chance, contains a great fund of truth; and, were it but polished, I should regard it as the most philosophic and best of your writings. From the date of these verses, it should appear that your majesty amused yourself in composing them some days previous to your adventure of Rosbach. You certainly were the only man in Germany who at that time wrote verses. Chance was not on our side. I cannot

but think that the man who boots himself at four in the morning has a great advantage, in play, over one who gets into his coach at noon. I passionately wish the game were ended, and that your days might be as peaceable as they are splendid. Your majesty has deigned to be not dissatisfied with the tribute of praise; and regret, which I have paid to the memory of the most respectable princess the world ever saw. True it is, my heart dictated the eulogium with tolerable speed; it has been corrected by reflection more slow. Forgive me for having added the following stanza, which I submit to your judgment. It seems to me that I have not sufficiently spoken of the courage with which that worthy princess ended her life.

*Illustres meurtriers, victimes mercenaires,
Qui, redoutant la honte et surmontant la peur,
Animés l'un par l'autre aux combats sanguinaires,
Fuiriez si vous l'osez, et mouriez par honneur ;

Une femme, une princesse,
Qui dédaigna la mollesse,
Qui du sort soutint les coups,
Et qui vit d'une ame égale
Voir son heure fatale,
Etais plus brave que vous *.*

Sorc

* Illustrious murderers, mercenary victims, who, dreading shame and surmounting fear, by each other urged to the sanguinary field, would fly had you the courage, yet die enamoured

Sort soutint produces a disagreeable cacophony: *venir* seems to me too weak. I can find nothing better to substitute; and I confess that, next to the art of winning battles, nothing is more difficult than that of writing poetry.

You would fly bad you the courage.—Your majesty will say—Speak for yourselves, gentlemen; and I, insignificant mortal, affirm that, had Cæsar found himself alone in the middle of night, and exposed incognito to a battery of cannon, from which there would be no means of escaping with life, except by covering himself up in a dunghill, or by hiding in some place still sweeter, Caius Julius Cæsar would have been discovered in the morning sunken up to the very neck.

This letter may happen to come to your majesty's hands under some battery, but you will not receive it up to the neck in a dunghill. Happy the man who like me crows, unmolested, on his own dunghill.

Receive, sire, with kindness the respectful follies of the old Swiss.

moured of honour; lo a woman, a princess, who, while disdaining feminine terrors, supporting the assaults of Fate, and beholding with mind unmoved her fatal hour approach, was braver than you all.

L E T T E R CCLXIX.

From the King.

Bolckenhain, April 11, 1759;

LET me request you would distinguish the times in which works are written. The Tristia of Ovid and his Art of Love were the productions of different periods. The æra of my Elegies is stamped by the dreadful catastrophe that left an arrow which will continue driven deeply in my heart, as long as I shall continue to see the light of day.

My other pieces were composed during intervals such as will occasionally occur, be war as hot as it will. I employ every weapon with which I may wound my enemies. I resemble the porcupine, that, erecting his quills, defends himself at all points. I do not affirm my defence is good; but it is requisite that we should exert our faculties, such as they are, and deal the best directed blows we are able, on our adversaries.

It should seem as if every kind of decorum had been forgotten, in the present war. The most polished nations attack each other like ferocious tigers. I blush for humanity: I blush for the age. We cannot but own that arts and

philosophy are only dispensed to the few ; the great mass, the people, and the vulgar part of the nobility, ever remain what Nature made them ; that is to say, malignant animals.

However great your fame may be, my dear Voltaire, do not imagine that the Austrian hussars are acquainted with your writings. I can assure you they are much greater connoisseurs in brandy than in fine poetry, or the works of celebrated authors.

We shall soon begin another campaign, which will be at least as hot a one as its predecessor. Prince Ferdinand affords my columns good support. God knows what will be the issue ! But this I can positively assure you, that they shall not purchase me at too cheap a rate ; and that, if I fall, the enemy must hew and strew the road to my destruction with dreadful carnage.

Adieu. I wish you every thing of which I find myself in want.

P. S. It is said your poem on Natural Law, the Philosophy of Good Sense, and the work of Helvetius on the Understanding, have all been burnt at Paris. Do but admire how apt vanity is to flatter itself. I derive a kind of glory, at perceiving that the very same epocha, which France has chosen to make war on me, is that in which war is made on good sense by that nation.

L E T T E R CCLXX.

From the King.

Landshut, April 18, 1759.

YOUR letters have been delivered to me without having been opened, either by hussars, French, or other barbarians. Men may write whatever they please with great impunity, without being at the head of a hundred and sixty thousand men, provided they do not print. Works have often been printed more strong than I ever have written, or ever shall write, without the least harm having happened to the author: witness your Maid of Orleans. For my own part, I write only for my amusement.

No man who is not a Frenchman born, or who has not been long an inhabitant of Paris, can possess the French language to that degree of perfection which is so very necessary to write good poetry, or elegant prose. In this respect I am tolerably just to myself, and am the first to make a proper estimate of my insignificant effusions. But they amuse and unbend my mind; this is the whole merit of my works. You have too much knowledge, and too much taste, to applaud such feeble talents.

Eloquence and poetry demand the whole application of the man: my duties at present oblige me to apply most seriously to other subjects: all which considered, you cannot but allow that sports so frivolous deserve not a serious thought.

I do not mock at any one; but I feel myself piqued against enemies, who, as far as they have the power, endeavour to crush me; and I certainly am not culpable for employing every weapon my arsenal contains, in my own defence, and to injure them. The unabating revenge which they have testified against me considered, it is no time to treat them with tenderness.

I congratulate you, on hearing that you are still gentleman in ordinary to the *well beloved*. But it is not by his patent that you will gain immortality: you are indebted for your apotheosis to the Henriade, Oedipus, Brutus, Semiramis, Merope, the Duke de Foix, &c. &c. These will establish your renown, as long as there shall be men on earth who cultivate the belles lettres, and while any persons of good taste, and lovers of the divine talent which you possess, shall remain. For my part, in favour of your genius, I pardon you all the tricks you played me at Berlin, all the libels of Leipsic, and all the things which you have uttered or printed

printed against me, which are strong, severe, and numerous, without preserving the least rancour.

I cannot say the same for my poor president, whom you hold in your gripe. Whether he manufacture children, or spit up his lungs, are things of which I am ignorant. Not but he were to be applauded, did he labour for the propagation of our species, at a time when all the powers of Europe are labouring for its destruction. I am overwhelmed by business and regulations. The campaign is immediately to begin. The part I have to act is the more difficult, because I must not be allowed to commit the least blunder; and because I am bound to behave with prudence, and sagacity, for eight long months of the year. I will do the best I can, but I find the task a very severe one.

Adieu,

F R E D E R I C .

P. S. Should the verses which I have sent you appear, I shall accuse no one but you. Your letter is a prelude to the fine use you wish to make of them; nor am I satisfied by what you have written to Catt. However it is a subject concerning which I trouble myself but little.

LETTER CCLXXI.

From the King.

Landshut, April 22, 1759.

THE verses to my sister Amelia I sent you as the sketch of an Epistle. My mind is not sufficiently at ease, neither have I time, to write any thing finished. Neither ought some inadvertencies, or some treasonable crimes committed against Vaugelas or D'Olivet, in the least to surprise you. Tell me; how is it possible to write pure French in Germany, and not to commit any mistakes from ignorance, or to offend against custom, when I perceive so many French poets, who live at Paris, in whose works such things swarm? I further remark that a good critic is necessary, who should point out those faults to us which self-love conceals, and who should inform us of the feeble and defective passages. I can easily detect the negligences of others; yet, when writing, I remain blind to my own. Such is the construction of the human mind.

Your new stanza to that fatal Ode is beautiful. I excuse the trifles by which you are stopped. Yet do not say that Marsyas sits in judgment

judgment on Apollo, should I debate with you on poetical subjects.

Instead of *du sort soutint les coups* might be substituted *affronte les coups*; and, in lieu of *venir son heure fatale* might be inserted *approcher l'heure fatale*.

Not but I own *son heure fatale* is better than *l'heure fatale*: of this I leave you to judge.

The Ode in general is very beautiful, but the following are some difficulties which an ignorant critic has started. You will confound him perhaps, resting on the authority of men like D'Olivet, the Forty, and the whole literary republic.

*Quand la mort, qu'ils ont bravée,
Dans cette foule abreuée
Du sang, qu'ils ont repandu **,

In the ambiguous phrase *dans cette foule abreuée*, is it death or the crowd that is satiated? I very well understand your meaning; but a great poet, like you, ought not to want a commentary to explain his thoughts.

Stanza V. I was beaten at Hochkirchen the very moment when my noble sister expired.

Stanza VI. admirable; VII. and VIII. excellent; IX. the same. The latter part of the Xth does not correspond with the former.

* When death, which they have braved in the crowd, satiated with the blood they have shed, T.

The phrases *la stupide ignorance—les Midas—les Homères—les Zoïles* are foreign to the subject of the Ode, and only serve to fill up. You are speaking of my sister, and neither of Homer nor of Zoilus.

Stanza XI. is good. The words *qui font des cours les plus belles* in stanza XII. are a wretched redundancy: the sense ends with *qui font des cours*; and *les plus belles* are unmeaning, and destitute of beauty; worthy of Mævius, and not of Virgil. They absolutely require to be corrected, for they are feeble and mean.

Stanza XIII. *Du temps qui suit toujours, tu fîs toujours usage**. The repetition of *toujours* is ungraceful. Were I desired to correct the line, tyro as I am, I should sweat blood and water †: but Voltaire is not Voltaire in vain; to give the line its full force were but worthy of him. *Lueur obscure, plus affreuse que la nuit* ‡ is equal to the *darkness visible* of Milton, which the author of the Henriade has ridiculed so much.

The XIVth and XVth stanzas are delightful.

I now think I see you reading my letter, and hear you exclaim—"Here is a novice indeed! " Let him first write good poetry himself, and

* That time which ever flies thou ever improvest.

† A proverbial phrase. T.

‡ Obscure glimmering, more fearful than night.

“then

"then let him pretend to correct others."—But I tell you once again, I cannot see my own faults. I often think my verses feeble, but want abilities to make them better. Beside, never suffer a general of an army, who is encamped in face of an enemy, to be your poetical judge; for, at such times, such men are most untractable.

I have deranged the plan of the campaign of marshal Daun, and of the French, without scarcely moving from my place. I am at present occupied by other follies of a like nature. Do not imagine you will find me a more indulgent critic, as long as this dog's life shall continue. We catch the spirit of our profession; and, in these times of alarm, I lay violent hands whenever I can on the enemy, and on all poetry which does not please me, my own excepted.

Adieu, Swiss hermit. Do not be vexed with Don Quixote, who throws the poetry of Ariosto into the fire, for it is unequal to yours. Treat a German critic, who writes to you from the wilds of Silesia, with some little indulgence.

FREDERIC.

L E T-

LETTER CCLXXII.

From the King.

Landshut, April 28, 1759.

I AM very much obliged to you, for having brought me acquainted with Mr. Candide; or with Job in a modern dress. It cannot be denied that doctor Pangloss is unable to prove his fine principles; and that the best of all possible worlds is a very vile and a very wretched world. This is the only species of romance which is fit to be read; it is instructive, and proves much more than arguments *in barbara, celarent, &c.*:

I have at the same time received that melancholy Ode, which is well corrected and highly embellished. Yet it is no more than a monument of remembrance, which will not restore her whom we have lost, and who well deserves eternal regret.

I wish you a speedy opportunity of writing in favour of peace; and I promise you I shall think any work written for that express purpose admirable. There is but little hope that we should see that happy day without great carnage.

It is your opinion that the courage of men consists

gists in what they call their honour ; but I will venture to affirm there is more than one kind of courage. There is constitutional courage, which is admirable for the common soldier ; there is the courage of reflection, which befits the officer ; there is the courage of patriotism, which every good citizen ought to possess ; and finally there is the courage which originates in the fanaticism of fame ; such as we admire in Alexander, in Cæsar, in Charles XII. and in the great Condé. Such are the different kinds of instinct which lead men into danger, which in itself has nothing either inviting or pleasant. But men think but little of danger, when they are once engaged.

I was not personally acquainted with Caius Julius Cæsar ; yet am I certain that, night or day, he would not have hidden himself. He was too generous to pretend to expose his companions, without partaking of their perils. We have even had examples of generals who, in despair to see a battle on the point of being lost, have expressly sought for death, that they might not survive their disgrace.

Such are the ideas with which my memory has supplied me, relative to that courage at which you laugh. I can safely assure you that I have seen great virtues exercised in the height of battle ; and that men at such times are not

so pitiful as you suppose. Of this I could cite you a thousand examples, but shall confine myself to one.

At the battle of Rosbach, a French officer was wounded, and lay on the ground, calling aloud for a clyster. Would you easily believe that a hundred officious persons were eager to supply him with the remedy for which he asked? An anodyne clyster administered in the field of battle, in the presence of an army, is certainly a singular thing; but the fact is true, and generally known. In the tragico-comedy which we act, ridiculous adventures often happen, such as can find no parallel, and which a thousand years of peace would never produce. It must however be allowed these pleasant incidents are dearly purchased.

I thank you for the consultation of the physician Tronchin, which I immediately sent to my brother, who is with my sister at Schwedt. I have advised him most scrupulously to observe the regimen which has been prescribed. I request you would ask what sum Tronchin requires to undertake a journey thither; for I wish to neglect nothing which may possibly contribute to the cure of my dear brother: and, though I have as little faith in doctors of physic as I have in doctors of divinity, I do not carry incredulity so

so far as to doubt of the good effects which regimen may produce. I myself am sensible of these effects. I never could have supported the dreadful fatigues I have undergone, had I not confined myself to a diet, which appears severe to all who surround me.

Whether it be worth our while to preserve our lives by so many precautions, and whether those people are not the most sage, and the happiest, who kill themselves as fast as they can, are questions yet to be resolved. I leave the discussion of this subject to Mr. Martin and doctor Pangloss. For my part, I must fight as long as fighting shall be good. You are but a spectator of the bloody tragedy we are acting; and while we continue on the stage, you may hiss when you please. Much good may it do you; be persuaded I do not envy your happiness. I am well convinced happiness is not to be obtained by those who are at war, either with the pen or with the sword.

Vale.

F R E D E R I C.

L E T -

LETTER CCLXXXIII.

From the King.

Landshut, May 18, 1759.*

YOUR traits of malice I forgive,
 But ne'er will I Petronius † place
 Beside those sons of fame to live,
 Who write with chasten'd wit and grace.

The scenes lascivious which he drew,
 With cynic skill, who can endure?
 Or who unmov'd his Muse can view
 Plunge, shameless, into streams impure?

A magazine is this our mind,
 In which we precious gems should stow:
 And, certain there such gems to find,
 Your wealthy realms I oft explore.

In sweet Racine my Muse delights;
 Nay, frown not, wantons with Rousseau;
 Enrapt she views the boundless flights
 Of Maro, Horace, and Boileau.

* There are no verses, though some were certainly sent, to be found in the Berlin Supplement; and those printed in the Basil edition, though I have inserted them, do not appear to be the whole of the Poem, for they do not mention the *congé* (*leave of absence*) or defeat of the enemy, referred to by the king. T.

† Petronius satirised the tyrant of whom he was the favourite. T.

And oft she'd reach their native skies,
And oft like them she fain would sing :
But, ah ! Whene'er she thus would rise,
She finds she wants their strength of wing.

If you will consult a map, you will find the place from which a fit of mirth produced this leave of absence. We have pursued these gentry, whose rear we turned behind Erfurt ; after which we took the road to Silesia.

You, inhabitants of the *Delices*, imagine that those who pursue the footsteps of your Amadis de Gaul, and your Orlando, were to fight once a day for your diversion. Know, an it please you, that we have enacted enough of such tragedies in past campaigns ; not but there will certainly be more of these heroic butcheries performed. But we shall observe the proverb of the emperor Augustus : *Festina lente*.

Your French folks burn good books, and merrily overturn the system of your finances, to give pleasure to your dear allies. Much good may it do them all ! I fear neither their money nor their swords. Should chance eternally favour the three most illustrious —, who assault me on every side, I hope they will (to preserve the rhetorical figure) * * * *. I am doomed to the fate of Orpheus ; ladies of Thrace, and of characters equally amiable, wish to rend me in pieces :

pieces : but they certainly will not have their wishes gratified.

Mentioning fools, you wish to be told what have been the adventures of the abbé de Prades ; but they would fill a large volume. To satisfy your curiosity, it will be sufficient to inform you that the abbé had the weakness to suffer himself to be bribed, during my stay at Dresden, by a secretary, who had been left there by Broglio, when he departed from the city. By self-appointment, he became news-writer to the army ; and, as this is a trade which is but little approved of in war, he has, till the arrival of peace, been sent into a retreat from which there is no news to write. Many other things might be added, but they would be too tedious. He played me this excellent trick at the very time when I had conferred a rich benefice on him, in the cathedral of Breslau.

You have written the Tomb of the Sorbonne ; to this add the Tomb of the Parliament, which is in a state of such dotage that it cannot be long lived.

Take care however not to die yourself. From the *Delices* you continue to dictate laws to Parnassus : you still caress the *infamous* — with one hand, and scratch with the other. You treat it as you treat me, and as you treat all the world :

As I perfume, aloof you stand,
And hold a pen in either hand :
The right each creek of self-love knows ;
And hence the stream of flatt'ry flows,
In gurgling sounds, so soft, and clear ;
That spell-bound is the lift'ning ear !
The left hand grasps a flaming sword,
Ta'en from Errynnis' secret hoard ;
Plung'd by the hags in lake mephitic,
Infernal pool of pains arthritic ;
Its temper acrid, colour black ;
The brain it pierces, and the back :
Ere it descends the members shake ;
The bones before it touches ache ;
A fire it in the heart allumes,
That smoulders while the man consumes.
At Bâle if Maupertuis expire,
He'll die of this devouring fire !

For me, though many a rhyme I've made,
I'm but a tyro in the trade :
I never yet could gain a place
Among the wits malignant race ;
Or climb the fam'd stupendous steep
Where they continual uproar keep.
But mine is now another task ;
Of you a favour I've to ask.
If e'er my name, by either hand,
In work of yours should written stand,
Of gall I hope you'll be bereft ;
I hope 'twill never be the left.

I wish peace and health, not to the gentleman
in ordinary, not to the historiographer of the

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H h

well.

well-beloved, not to the lord of the twenty manors in Switzerland, but to the author of the *Henriade*, the *Maid of Orleans*, *Brutus*, *Merope*, &c.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCLXXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

May, 1759.

YOUR verses flow with so much ease,
You rival those who most can please,
Chapelle, Chaulieu, and Sarrasin
You've studied, thus our hearts to win.
Yet sure Petronius, good and gay,
What though impure, you pardon may.
I know you well ; though coy you seem,
You blush not at the wanton theme,
But rather love luxurious tale,
When cover'd by transparent veil.

For Maupertuis, pack'd up in pitch,
Should he perchance drop down the niche
Which he to old earth's center bor'd,
And safely there his body hoard,
I should be sorry for his fate :
I feel no unrelenting hate ;
I kill him not, but well may say
He shut me from the light of day ;
Expell'd me heav'n, which was my due :
Yes—drove me from the sight of you.

This

This is all I have to answer, feeble and muffled up as I am, with a cold in my eyes, to the most malignant of monarchs, and the most amiable of men, who is continually giving me gashes in the face, and who calls out that he is scratched. Deal your gashes on marshals Daun and Fermor, but spare your old and meagre victim. Your majesty says you do not fear our money; the little we have is truly not very formidable; and, with respect to our swords, you have given them a trifling lesson. May God grant you peace, fire; and may every sword be returned to the scabbard! Such are the good prayers of a Swiss philosopher in behalf of all Europe, the various kingdoms of which individually feel the horrors of war. We have lately suffered a bankruptcy at Lyons, of one million eight hundred thousand livres (seventy-five thousand pounds sterling) thanks to this fine war.

With respect to the parliament of Paris, that olio of tutors for kings, it is somewhat different from the parliament of England. Its follies have been so loudly vaunted of, by such numbers of black-gowns, advocates, and attorneys, that they have fermented and overflowed in the head of Damiens, the bastard of Ravaillac. Similar follies, propagated by the Jesuits, have cost the

king of Portugal an arm*. To this add all which is passing from the Vistula to the Maine; and you cannot but recognize the best of all possible worlds.

I once more wish you may soon bring this wretched state of affairs to an end. You are a legislator, warrior, historian, poet, and musician; be also a philosopher. After having buried ourselves, during life, with heroism, and the arts, what do we take with us to the grave? A vain name, which is no longer ours. All is sorrow or vanity: so said that Solomon who was not the Solomon of the North. Away to Sans-Souci; to Sans-Souci as fast as you can!

De Prades, I find, is a Doëg, an Achitophel. What, betray you when you were loading him with favours! Oh thou best of all possible worlds, where art thou? I, like Martin, am a manichean.

Your majesty, in your charming epistle, reproaches me for occasionally careassing the *infamous* —. You do wrong, sire; I labour only to extirpate it; and I have been rather successful, among the worthy part of mankind. I shall soon do myself the honour to send you a

* The king of Portugal was wounded in the arm, by those who attempted his assassination. T.

short

short piece which perhaps may be found to be of use.

Believe me, sire, I was formed to be wholly yours. I am ashamed to find myself more happy than you are ; for I live among philosophers, and you are only surrounded by most excellent murderers in short-cut coats. Once more, away to Sans-Souci ! But what is to be done there with an imagination so infernally restless ? Is it formed for retreat ? Oh, yes ! You are formed for all things.

L E T T E R CCLXXV.

From M. de Voltaire.

May, 1759.

SITUATED in what manner you will, it is very certain you will ever remain a great man. I do not write to weary your majesty, but to confess myself, on condition you will grant me absolution. I have betrayed you. The fact is as follows :

You wrote a letter to me, partly in the style of Marcus Aurelius, your patron ; and partly in that of Martial and Juvenal, your other patrons. I soon shewed it to a little French coquette, from the court of France, who came

like others to the temple of Esculapius, at Geneva, that she might be cured by the great Tronchin : great in every sense of the word, for he is six feet high, handsome, and well formed; and, were his highness prince Ferdinand, your brother, a woman, he would imitate the examples that are set him, and come likewise to be cured. This little coquette is, as I believe I have informed your majesty, the very intimate friend of a certain duke and minister. She has much wit, and their friendship is mutual. She was quite enraptured, kissed your letter, and would have been still more ravenous, had you been there. Send it immediately to my friend, said she, who has loved you from his childhood : he admires the king of Prussia, nor does he in any respect think like *the rest* : he sees things as they are. He is a true knight ; one of those who have wit in their anger.

The lady was so persuasive that I copied your letter, very civilly retrenching all which appertained to Martial and to Juvenal, and very faithfully leaving the whole of Marcus Aurelius ; that is to say, all your prose. Not however that your Marcus Aurelius does not deal us many a fideblow, and then pretends we are ambitious. Alas, sire, we are very fine folks indeed to talk of ambition !

In

In fine, I cannot forbear to send you the answer which was returned me. I may well be allowed to betray a duke and a peer, after having betrayed a king. But I conjure you not to let this be known. Endeavour, sire, to decypher the writing : it is possible to possess much wit, and very excellent sentiments, and yet to write a very cat's scrawl.

There was formerly, sire, a lion and a mouse ; the mouse was in love with the lion, and went to pay his court to him : the lion gave him a little pat with his claw, and the mouse ran into his hole. Still the mouse continued to love the lion ; and one day, seeing a net that was spread to entrap and kill the lion, he gnawed the threads asunder.

The mouse, sire, most submissively in all humility kisses your royal claws. He will never die with a capuchin on each side of him, as one of the mastiffs of St. Malo has done at Basil*. His wish was to die beside his lion. Believe me, the mouse was more affectionate than the mastiff.

* Maupertuis. T.

LETTER CCLXXVI.

From the King.

Reich-Hennersdorf, June 10, 1759.

KNOW that, unless he whom you wot of should return to earth to work miracles, my brother will never travel in search of any man : he still is, God be thanked, a sufficiently wealthy lord to pay a Swiss physician for his trouble, and his journey. Nor are you ignorant that the Frederics*, being more numerous than the Louises†, are more potent than the latter, among physicians. Poets, and sometimes even philosophers themselves, occupied as they are in vain speculations, pay but little attention to the science of morality.

Your niece has given vent to her pompous zeal, in favour of her nation. She has burnt my writings, as I did yours at Berlin, and as yours have been burnt in France. You French folks are all extravagant, when the pre-eminence of their kingdom is called in question. How delighted are they to pronounce the phrase, “ The “ king, my master!” as well as to affect the ridiculous style of the antiquated etiquette of ambas-

* † Gold coins.

T.

fadors,

fadors, and to wrangle, right or wrong, for kings who do not do them the honour to know there are such people in existence. It is really a pity that your niece had not married Matthew Prior; they would have produced a most excellent race of politicians.

For my part, I spare no one when I am vexed; and, in my anger, I bite as hard as I am able.

According to all appearance, we shall soon have a battle; and, should I be but a little favoured by fortune, the sub-delegates of their imperial majesties, and the man with the consecrated toka*, shall be well bastinadoed; after which, how great will the consolation of laughing at them be!

Having no enemies to fight with, for God's sake do not you laugh at any one. Remain peaceable and happy, since you have no persecutors; and be wise enough to enjoy, undisturbed, that tranquillity which you have obtained, after having been in search of it these sixty years.

Adieu.—I wish you health and peace. Amen: so be it.

FREDERIC.

P. S. Are you in your senses? It is time, at the age of seventy, that you should learn the style in which it becomes you to write to me.

? Or cap. T.

It

It is time you should comprehend that though there are liberties in which men of letters and of wit are indulged, there also are intolerable impertinences. Be at length a philosopher, that is to say rational. May heaven, which has endowed you with so much wit, endow you with an equal portion of judgment! Should that ever happen, you would be the first man of the age, and perhaps the first the world ever saw. This is what I wish you. So be it.

LETTER CCLXXVII.

From the King.

Reich-Hennersdorf, June 20, 1759.

WERE these the times of ancient chivalry, I should have replied that you lied in your throat, for publicly affirming I wrote to you to defend my history of Brandenburg, against the absurdities that have been said concerning it, by an abbé with his name ending in *is* or in *ac*. I care very little for my works : I have not that enthusiastic love for them which celebrated authors shew for the least work which drops from their pen. I will not fight with any man, either in defence of my prose or verse ; and critics may censure them in what manner they please, without

once breaking my rest. I therefore entreat you would not be too warm in so trifling a cause, which does not merit that you should draw your dagger against my literary enemies.

You exclaim so loudly for peace, that it would better become you to write, with that noble impertinence which fits so well upon you, against those who retard its conclusion ; that is, against all who are seized with convulsions and the delirium of war. It would be a singular trait in history, were it to be said, in the nineteenth century, that the famous Voltaire, who in his time wrote so many things against booksellers, bigots, and bad taste, had by his works put princes to the blush, for the war which they made on each other ; and that he obliged them to conclude peace, the conditions of which he himself dictated.

Be this task yours, and you will erect a monument to yourself, which time will never destroy. Virgil accompanied Mæcenas in his journey to Brindusium, where Augustus concluded a peace with Anthony ; and Voltaire without travelling, will it be said, was the preceptor of kings, as he was of Europe. I could wish this incident might be added to your life, and that I might very soon have to congratulate you on the event.

Adieu.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCLXXVIII.

From the King.

Reich-Hennendorf, July 2, 1759.

IN mock'ry why do you require
 Of me to quell war's raging fire ?
 For peace I wish, which I adore :
 I wish, but what can I do more ?
 Your Gallic king and empress-queen,
 Your Russian of detested mien,
 A haughty and ambitious tribe,
 Whose secrets Tronchin can divine,
 On ruin only can agree ;
 They're neither friends of peace nor me.
 For you, enamour'd as you are
 Of peace, and thus abhorring war,
 The second Well-belov'd * dispose
 To rid the world and me of foes.

To him you must address yourself, or to his *Amboise en fantanges* †. But these people have their heads full of the projects of ambition ; they are not easily satisfied ; they insist on being the arbitrators of kings, and this is what those who hold my opinion will never suffer. I am as desirous of peace as you could wish, but I desire it to be a good, permanent, and honourable peace. Socrates, or

* *Second bien-aimé*. The duke de Choiseul. T.

† Meaning the marchioness de Pompadour. *Amboise* was minister of state under Louis XII. ; and *en fantanges* signifies in topknots, or dressed with ribbands. T.

Plato,

Plato, would have thought like me in this, had they seen themselves placed on that accursed point in which I am stationed in this world.

Can you imagine there is any pleasure in leading this dog's life ; in murdering people whom you never saw before ; in daily losing acquaintances and friends ; in seeing reputation hourly exposed to the caprice of chance; in passing all the year in troubles and alarms, and in continually risking life and fortune ?

I am certainly acquainted with the value of tranquillity, the sweets of society, and the charms of life ; and I as certainly could wish to be as happy as any man whatever. But, though all these good things are to be desired, I would not purchase them by acts of meanness, and of infamy. Philosophy teaches us to perform our duty, and faithfully to serve our country, at the price of our blood and our peace, and to devote ourselves entirely to these. The illustrious Zadig met with many adventures, which were not to his taste ; Candidus did the same : they however patiently suffered their ills. What finer example can be followed, than that given by these heroes.

Take my word for it, our short skirts are equal to your red heels, to the Hungarian cloaks, and to the green coats of the Roxolanians. We are now at the heels of the latter, who by their stupidity afford

afford us fine sport. You will see I shall extricate myself from the difficulties of the present year, and shall free myself both from the greens and the whites *.

The Holy Ghost must have backward inspired the creature blessed of his holiness, who appears to have much of lead in his posteriors. I shall the more certainly escape all this disgrace, because I have, in my camp, a true heroine, a maid more brave than Joan of Arc. This divine girl was born in the center of Westphalia, and in the vicinity of Hildesheim. I have moreover a fanatic, who was born I know not where, and who swears, by his God and his great devil, that we shall hack and hew down all our opponents.

Thus then do I reason. The good king Charles drove the English out of France by the help of his maid : it is therefore evident that, by the help of mine, we shall vanquish the *three ladies* : for you well know that, in Paradise, the saints always have a fly sort of kindness for your fair virgins. To all this I add that Mahomet had his pigeon, Sertorius his hind, and your enthusiast of the Cevennes his fat Nicholas; hence my conclusion is that my maid, and my prophet, are at least equal to these.

* The colours of the Russian and Austrian uniforms. T.

Do

Do not place to the account of war those misfortunes and calamities to which it has no relation. The abominable attempt of Damiens, and the cruel conspiracy to assassinate the king of Portugal, are crimes committed as frequently in peace as in war : they are the result of the blind fury of an absurd zeal. In despite of philosophy and her schools, man will remain the most malignant animal on the earth. Superstition, interest, revenge, treachery, and ingratitude will, to the end of time, be productive of tragical and sanguinary scenes ; because we are generally governed by our passions, and very rarely by our reason. There will ever be wars, law suits, devastations, earthquakes, bankruptcies. Of such are the annals of this world composed.,

Since these things are, my creed tells me it is necessary that things so must be. Master Pangloss will explain the reason ; but, as I have not the honour to be a doctor, I confess my ignorance. It nevertheless appears to me that, had the universe been made by a beneficent Being, he would have rendered us more happy than we are. The ægis of Zeno only can protect us against calamity ; the garlands of Epicurus must crown us in times of prosperity.

Labour at your cheefe-pres, brew your beer, and reap your corn, without disturbing yourself whether

whether the next year will be plentiful or barren. The gentleman of the *well beloved* has promised me, an old lion though he be, to give the *infamous* — a pat in the face. I am in expectation of his book; and in the mean time I send you an *Akakia** against his holiness, which I flatter myself will edify your beatitude.

I recommend myself to the muse of the general of the capuchins, to the architect of the church of Ferney, to the prior of the nuns of Saint Sacrement, and to the mundane glory of the pope Rezzonico, of the maid Joan of Arc, &c. &c.

I really can hold no more. I would as soon converse with the count of Sabines, the chevalier of Tuſculum, and the marquis of Andes. Titles are only the ornaments of fools; great men have no need of such baubles.

Adieu. Health and prosperity to the author of the Henriade; the most malicious and the most seductive of all the wits that have been, are, or ever shall be. *Vale.*

F R E D E R I C.

* The title given by Voltaire to the satire he wrote against Maupertuis. T.

L E T -

L E T T E R CCLXXIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R E,

July, 1759.

Y O U are as good a brother as you are a general : but it is not possible for Tronchin to go to Schwedt, to visit the prince, Ferdinand ; he has seven or eight persons from Paris, whom the physicians have given up, who have caused themselves to be transported either to Geneva or its neighbourhood, and who believe they shall breathe no longer than while Tronchin is at their elbow. Your majesty will imagine that I do not among these enumerate my poor niece, who has been languishing these six years. Tronchin likewise watches over the health of the royal children of France, and sends his opinion from Geneva twice a week. He cannot leave his home, and he pretends that the malady of prince Ferdinand will be tedious. It may happen to suit the patient to undertake this journey, which will likewise contribute to his health, by causing him to pass from a cold to a temperate climate. If not, the best mode will be to inform Tronchin, twice a week, of the state of his health.

How could you imagine it was possible I should
VOL. VII. I i suffer

suffer a copy to be taken of your writing, addressed to the prince of Brunswic ? It certainly contains beauties, but not such as are proper to expose to my nation. The French would not there find themselves flattered ; the king of France still less : and I respect all parties too much ever to permit that to transpire which would but conduce to render you irreconcilable. My prayers have continually been for peace. I am still in possession of a great part of the correspondence of the margraves of Bareuth with cardinal de Tencin, to endeavour to procure a blessing so necessary to a great part of Europe. I was the depository of all the attempts made to obtain so desirable an end. I never abused the confidence reposed in me, neither shall I abuse yours respecting a writing which has an absolutely contrary tendency ; of this be perfectly assured. My unfortunate niece, who trembled at this writing, burnt it ; and there is no vestige remaining of it, except in my memory, which has retained three very beautiful stanzas.

I am bewildered, when you tell me that I have said severe things to you. For twenty successive years you were my idol.

This I proclaimed to earth, to heaven, and to
“ Gufman himself.”

But your heroic trade, and your kingly dignity, do not render the heart exceedingly alive to
feeling.

feeling. This is a pity, for your heart was made to be humane ; and, had it not been for heroism, and a throne, you had been the most amiable of mankind in private society.

My letter is too long, if you are facing the enemy ; and too short if you are alone, in the bosom of philosophy, which is of much greater worth than fame itself.

Take it for granted that I am ever foolish enough to love you, and just enough to admire you : be open to candour, and receive with bounty the profound respect of the Swiss

VOLTAIRE.

L E T T E R CCLXXX.

From the King.

Ringsvormek, July 18, 1759.

REALLY you are a singular creature ! When I am desirous to scold you, I hear two words from you, and reproach expires on my lips.

Such is thy grace, Voltaire, thy wit, thine ease,
So well thou know'st the wondrous art to please,
What though thy malice makes my anger rise,
Thou dost but smile, and lo my anger dies !

I i 2

Thus

Thus do you treat me. With respect to your niece, it is to me indifferent whether she burn or roast me. Neither imagine that I am so much alive as you suppose to what your bishops in *ic* or in *ac* may say of me. Mine is the fate of all actors who play in public; they are favoured by some, and spoken ill of by others. It is necessary to be prepared for satire, calumny, and a multitude of falsehoods which are rumoured respecting us; but these things do not in the least disturb my tranquillity. I pursue my road, do nothing contrary to the voice of conscience, and care very little for the manner in which my actions are painted, in the brains of unfeathered bipeds, that very often have very little thought.

Since you are so good a Prussian (for which I congratulate myself) I think it right to inform you of what is passing here.

The man with the toka, and the papal sword, is stationed on the confines of Saxony and Bohemia. I have seated myself opposite him, in a position that, in every sense of the word, is advantageous. The game at chess is in that state which is preparatory to checkmate. You, who are so good a player, know that every thing depends on the arrangement of the tables; I cannot tell you what will be the result. The Russians are spell-bound: Dohna has not said *Sun stand still*, like Joshua
of

of defunct memory; but *Bear stand still*, and the bear stood.

So much for your military instructions. I now come to the end of your letter.

I well know that I idolized you, while I neither supposed you artful nor malignant; but you have played me tricks of so many kinds—Let us drop the subject. I have pardoned you all, with a christian heart. You certainly have done me more good than harm. Your works give me the more pleasure, because I am callous to your scratches. Had you no defects, you would too much humble the human race; and the whole world would with reason be jealous, and envious of your advantages.

At present it is said — “ Voltaire is the finest genius all the ages of the world have produced; but I however am better-tempered, more mild, calm, and sociable than he is.” — And thus do the vulgar console themselves.

I speak to you like your confessor. Be not angry, but rather endeavour to add to your other great qualities those shades of perfection which I wish, with all my heart, I could admire in you.

We are told you are making Socrates the hero of a tragedy, which I scarcely can believe. Which way can women have any part in such a

piece, in which love could be nothing better than a cold episode? The subject can afford nothing but a beautiful fifth act, the Phedon of Plato one fine scene, and there it ends.

I am corrected of certain prejudices, and avow that I do not think love misplaced in tragedy; as in the *Duc de Foix*, *Zaire*, and *Alzire*. Say what we will, I never can read Berenice without shedding tears. You may tell me perhaps that my tears are misplaced: think so if you please; but you will never persuade me that a piece which moves, which affects me, is bad.

A multitude of affairs pour in upon me. Live in peace; and, if you have no other disturbance of mind than that arising from my resentment, your heart may be perfectly at its ease. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCLXXXI.

From M. de Voltaire.

August, 1759.

YOU 're not the madman's son, at Rheims erst crown'd,
By English Henry afterward dethron'd;
You court no beauteous Agnes, chaste and sage,
Who first a friar lov'd, and next a page;
Of Denis, or of Joan, great saint, and maid
With ass profane, you ask no heav'nly aid.

The

The Denis of our day, the hero bold,
 Who faints, and Joans of Arc, and warriors old,
 In deeds of mighty prowess doth surpass,
 I know him well ; nay more, I know the aſs.
 March for Vienna ; there the maid you'll find :
 For there, oh rare ! fits Chrafty enshrin'd !
 March, without let or hindrance ; there you'll view
 Heroes, perhaps, and virgins not a few :
 March till you've conquer'd kingdoms, friends, and foes ;
 And then march back, and sweetly taste repose.

Your verses are charming ; and, should your majesty have beaten your enemies, they will be still better. As for your papal Akakia, I think it very artful, and so drawn up as that three fourths of the protestants will believe it to be true. It contains matter to make your acute-scented politicians laugh, and to induce fools to confession. I expect some edifying pieces, which a sage who is one of my friends is to send me from the east ; these I shall remit to your majesty. But I am afraid you want leisure, at the close of the campaign ; and that you are so occupied in cudgelling the Abasrians, Bulgarians, Roxolanians, Scythians, and the Maffagetae, that you have not time to apply yourself to philosophy, and to the destruction of the *infamous* ——. I take the liberty dying to recommend, by will, this *infamous* —— to your majesty. She is more your enemy than you believe. Her virgin and her fanatic are indeed something :

but this virgin and this fanatic will not reform the west; whereas Frederic was born to enlighten the world. Of this I shall do myself the honour speak more hereafter.

L E T T E R CCLXXXII.

From the King.

September 22, 1759.

THE duchess of Saxe-Gotha has sent me your letter, &c. As I have lately been strangely buffeted by fortune, all correspondence has been interdicted. I have not received your packet of the 29th; and it is even with great difficulty that I send you this letter, which perhaps will not have the good fortune to come to hand.

My situation is not so desperate as my enemies report; I shall still finish my campaign well: my courage does not fail me. But I perceive peace is upon the tapis: I cannot say any thing positive on the subject, except that I feel I have honour enough for ten men; and that, let what misfortune will come, I am incapable of any action which should, in the least, wound so tender and so delicate a feeling, in a man who thinks

thinks like an ancient knight : though honour is but of small estimation among those infamous politicians who think like tradesmen.

I know nothing of what you wish me to understand ; but, with respect to peace, the following are two conditions from which I will never depart. First, that it shall be made in conjunction with my faithful allies ; and, secondly, that it shall be honourable and glorious. Thus you see I have nothing left but my honour, which I will preserve at the price of my blood.

If peace be wished, let them propose nothing to me which can be repugnant to the delicacy of my sentiments. I am in the very convulsion of military operations. I am like gamesters in misfortune, who are obstinate in opposing ill success. I have forced the return of fortune, who is a fickle dame, more than once. I am opposed by such blockheads that I must necessarily gain some advantage over them : but, let what will be the good pleasure of his sacred majesty Chance, concerning this I trouble myself but little. Thus far my conscience does not reproach me for any of the misfortunes which have happened. The battle of Minden, that of Cadiz, and the loss of Canada, are powerful arguments to restore the French to reason ; with which, dosed as she is by Austrian hellebore, she has quarrelled.

quarrelled. There is nothing I so much wish as peace, provided it be not disgraceful. After having successfully combated against all Europe, it would be shameful for me to lose, by a single dash of the pen, what I have maintained by the sword.

Such are my thoughts. You do not find me in rose water; but Henry IV. Louis XIV. and my very enemies themselves, were and are no better than myself. Were I a private man, I should yield for the love of peace; but we ought to catch the spirit of our rank. I can say no more at present. In three or four weeks, the means of communication will be more open, &c.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCLXXXIII,

From the King.

The camp near Wilsdruf,
November 17, 1759.

MANY thanks for the tragedy of Socrates, which ought to confound that absurd fanaticism which is the present prevailing vice in France; and which, unable to exercise its ambitious

ambitious fury on political subjects, fixes upon books, and on the apostolic preachers of good sense.

The death of Socrates, pourtray'd by you,
 Shudd'ring the shav'd and mitred herd shall view,
 Lo ! how fanatics foam ! In wrath they rise,
 And Reason banish to her native skies !
 To wreak your vengeance, and the truth to urge,
 Athenian backs you borrow, while you scourge,
 The wretches feel the rod, and clamours coin ;
 With bigot priests the bigot lawyers join ;
 In grief they join, and mutually deplore
 That fire and hemloc times are now no more !
 Yet, loath of infidel to lose controul,
 Though not his body, still they burn his soul ;
 For doctors hold it cannot be denied
 That souls the better are the more they're fried ;
 And, while men grant but this, the good Sorboane
 Rejoice to think they're yet not quite undone :
 Their choicest faggots, from their choicest store,
 Alert they call, and bid the flames devour
 The man, blasphemous, whose enlighten'd page
 Laughs at their fables, and instructs our age.
 Mock'ry they hate ; for who e'er saw the fool
 Who shook not at the rod of ridicule ?
 Him would they gladly burn who mocks them most ;
 But, him not having caught, his works they roast.

On this I condole with you. However, all things well considered, it were better that the book should be burnt than the man. You ought to be well persuaded I do not join these people.

You

You complain that I assault you ; if so, it is unknown to myself, or at least unintentional. Be kind enough to recollect that I am surrounded by enemies, and pressed on all sides : one goads me, another gives me a cuff, a third insults me; and, in fine, patience is exhausted : an instinct of feeling too suddenly rises superior to the voice of reason ; irritated wrath flames forth, and in certain moments I am like—

The foaming boar, that daring turns to face
 The furious efforts of the yelping race ;
 And oft his tushes on the writhing hound
 Inflicts the pang, and deals the deadly wound.
 But, unappall'd by death, the raging pack,
 On ev'ry side, redouble their attack :
 The raging pack he meets, he tosses, turns,
 Tramples, and rends ; with fell revenge he burns ;
 Their fangs he feels ; no respite can he find ;
 The fierce in front, the cowardly behind ;
 Till mad with pain, and headlong in his ire,
 Upon the spear he plunges, there t' expire.

Like as this hunted beast, while each annoys,
 The bloodhound misses and the lamb destroys ;
 So doth th' ill-fated warrior oft mistake,
 And, when he would his thirst of vengeance slake,
 To pity deaf, blind to the blood that 's spilt,
 Makes Innocence divide the dues of Guilt !
 The sage his error views, and viewing sighs,
 The scene deplores, and speechless turns and flies.

Suffer me therefore to bite the bridle, while this painful campaign shall continue, and wait till a serene sky shall succeed to so many clouds and storms. Your vivid imagination leads me to Vienna, where you introduce me to the shrine of Chastity; but know, I have learnt from experience what it is to approach malicious women.

Mature in age, can you suppose
 Love's flame within my bosom glows?
 When warm desires have ta'en their flight,
 In Venus' wars can man delight?
 Voluptuous thoughts and warm desires,
 With Cupid's flights and Cupid's fires,
 The days are many since I knew;
 I own 'tis pity, but 'tis true.
 Virginity, thy tender flow'r,
 Thy wiles, oh woman, and thy pow'r,
 In vain may bloom, in vain are spent
 On silver locks, and body bent.
 One of the council of the chaste
Perforce am I, and not *per taste*:
 Your good men do but little win,
 If good because they cannot fin.

During the whole campaign I have had no beatific vision, *in the style of that of Moses**; the barbarous Cossacs and Tartars, in every sense

* *Dans le gout de celle de Moïse* are words not inserted in the Berlin edition. T.

an infamous race, unfortunately have refused to shew us their *back parts*: but they have burnt and ravaged countries, and committed acts the most inhumanly atrocious; and this is all I know of them. Prospects so gloomy do not put me into a good humour.

Inconstant Fortune, vain, and proud
Of being courted by the crowd,
More various than the varying wind,
No arm has strength enough to bind.
We must not always hope t' oppose
Successfully such swarms of foes.
Chance sometimes doth the victor crown;
But Chance can smile and Chance can frown.
Of this do you want proof and sample?
Here lo I stand, a mark'd example.

Howe'er, the hero, sanctified
By Antichrist, of Rome the pride,
The modern Fabius, laugh who will,
Much more dispos'd to save than kill,
Afraid left holy sword and cap
Might chance to meet with some mishap,
Retreats: observe, I do not say
The modern Fabius runs away.
But should he, by God's saving grace,
Shew what no language calls his face,
Which marches, hitherto by night,
Have carefully conceal'd from sight,
Then will a certain Gallic duke,
Right vain of heart and proud of look,
With Neptune's trident arm'd, appear
The storm, if so his grace shall please:

And

And please he will, or men will add
 They doubt his grace is rather mad.
 For France this noble duke shall plead,
 And thus her recantation read—

“ Our heroes—Where ?—Our money ? None—
 “ Canada lost!—Our credit gone !—
 “ Cease, oh sons of Albion, cease !
 “ Oh sons of Albion grant us peace !”

The French, I grant, have words at will ;
 They all know how to gild the pill ;
 And, therefore, what he has to say
 In words more specious he'll convey ;
 But me a fland'rous ass proclaim,
 Should not their sense be just the same.

When this good news shall see the light,
 From fields of blood I'll take my flight ;
 The casque and helmet I'll reject,
 Philosophy no more neglect,
 But all her soothing lessons greet,
 And seek content in calm retreat.

This calm retreat, by which I mean *Sans-Souci*, I shall think equal to the *Delices*. I shall imagine I there live free from the agitation of courts, and shall occasionally be alone.

Enjoy your hermitage : disturb not the ashes of those who rest in the grave, and let death set limits to your unjust hatred. Recollect that kings, after long warfare, at length make peace. Must your war be eternal ? I imagine you, like Orpheus, would be capable of descending to hell,

not to move the heart of Pluto, not to bring back the beauteous Emily, but to pursue, in this abode of pain, an enemy whom your rancour did but too much persecute in this world *. For my sake renounce your vengeance; or rather sacrifice it to your own reputation, that the greatest genius may be the most generous of the sons of France. Duty and virtue speak with my lips: be not deaf to their discourse; but perform an action worthy of the fine maxims which you retail, with so much elegance and force, in your works.

We approach the end of our campaign, which will be good. I will write to you, in about eight days, from Dresden; with more tranquillity and connexion than I do at present.

Adieu. Negociate, labour, enjoy, and write in peace. May the God of philosophers, by inspiring you with more gentle sentiments, preserve you as the oracle of reason and of truth!

FREDERIC.

* Maupertuis, who had lately died at Basil.

L E T T E R CCLXXXIV.

From the King.

Wilsdruf, November 19, 1759.

I HAVE just received the letter of the mouse, or of the aspic, dated the 6th of November, as I am about to close the campaign. The Austrians are retiring into Bohemia; where, by way of reprisal for the conflagrations made by them in my provinces, I have burnt two of their grand magazines. I render the retreat of the sanctified hero as difficult as possible; and I hope he will meet with some mishaps yet, within these few days. From the declaration delivered in at the Hague, you will perceive how far the king of England and I are inclined to peace. This public proceeding will open the eyes of the world, and distinguish the firebrands of Europe from those who love humanity, tranquillity, and peace. The door is open; all who please may come and speak. It is at the option of France to explain herself. The French are naturally eloquent: we shall listen with admiration to what they have to say; and answer, in our vile jargon, to the best of our power. The chief point will be the sincerity of the parties. I am

persuaded that means of accommodation may be found. A sage and moderate minister is at the head of affairs in England. Chimerical plans must be banished, on all sides ; and reason, rather than the extravagance of imagination, must be consulted. For my part, I shall follow the example of the gentle Saviour, who, the first time he went to the temple, was satisfied with listening to the Scribes and Pharisees.

Do not suppose that the English confide all their secrets to me ; they are in no haste for peace ; their trade does not suffer ; their affairs prosper, and the kingdom wants neither resources nor credit. The war I make is more severe, from the multitude of enemies that attack me, and the heavy burthen I bear. I notwithstanding always return a proper answer, some time before the end of the campaign ; though it may be impossible, on all occasions, to do as much. I am on the point of conciliation with the Russians ; thus I shall next year only have to face the queen of Hungary, the scurvy scoundrels* of the Holy Empire, and the robbers of Lapland. Our proceedings have been dictated by feeling, by a sentiment of humanity, desirous to stop the torrent of blood which inundates almost all our hemisphere, and which would put an end to

* *Les malandrins.*

massacres,

massacres, barbarities, fire, sword, and all the abominations committed by men whom the wretched habit of bathing their hands in blood daily renders more ferocious. Should the war be protracted but a little, Europe will again decline into the darkness of ignorance, and men will become wild beasts.

It is time these horrors should end : all our disasters are the consequence of the ambition of Austria and France. Let these nations prescribe limits to their vast projects ; and, if reason be ineffectual, let their exhausted finances, and the wretched state of their affairs, render them prudent ! Let them blush to learn that Heaven, which sustains the feeble against the mighty, has granted the former moderation enough not to abuse their good fortune, but to offer peace.

This is all which a poor, fatigued, harassed, lame, rickety, scratched and clawed lion has to tell you. I have many affairs on hand, and cannot write to you at my ease till I shall arrive at Dresden. The project of making peace is that of rendering men rational who are accustomed to be absolute, and who are obstinate and headstrong. Do you accomplish this, and I will congratulate you, and congratulate myself still more. Adieu to the mouse, who has dreams so excellent that they might be taken for inspiration. May he,

in his hole, enjoy ease, tranquillity, and that peace which he is in possession of, and for which we hope ! So be it.

FREDERIC.

N. B. You know that the interpreters and commentators of scripture hold various opinions, on the meaning of certain passages. According to the reverend father Dionysius-Hortella, when Cæsar shall be king of the Jews, himself a Jew, and when he shall be duke of Lorraine, the Turks and the French shall then render to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's. He adds that such an example will encourage all the petty princes of Europe to imitate the restitution. What is your opinion ? This learned doctor does not seem to reason much amiss.

L E T T E R CCLXXXV.

From the King.

Friedberg, February 24. 1760.

HOW fresh the wreaths of blooming bays,
That daily crown your wondrous lays !
The Muses favours are your own ;
Their genial lover are you known.
The lyre, the mask, the sock, the story
Of fools and heroes, fwell your glory.

Yet

Yet all these mighty works, which Fame
And Mem'ry's daughters fondly claim,
Imperfect are, till they bequeath
Of laurel yet one other wreath :
'Tis theirs, or yours, this blest increase ;
'Tis theirs, or yours, to give us peace !
By this great deed augment the mists,
And thus shall you yourself surpass.

Such are my thoughts ; such are the thoughts of all Europe. Virgil has written poetry as beautiful as yours ; but he never concluded a peace. This will be an advantage obtained by you over all your brethren of Parnassus, should you be successful.

I know not who has betrayed me, and has thought proper to publish rhapsodies which were only meant for my private amusement, and never intended for the world's perusal. But I am so accustomed to treachery, ill treatment, and perfidious acts, that I should be very happy were all the evil which has been done me, and which others are projecting to do me, confined to the clandestine edition of these poems. You better know than I can say, how much those who write for the public ought to respect the taste, and even the prejudices, of this public. Hence have originated the shades of difference observable between authors, according to the ages in which they lived and wrote ; and this is

the reason why men, who were even superior to their age, have been subjected to the yoke of fashion. It was my intention to have been a poet incognito ; but I am brought before the public in my own despite, where I shall act a very silly part. But, what matter ? I will not die in their debt.

You mention circumstances of an affair which never reached my ear. I know that you were obliged, at Frankfort, to give up my poems, and some baubles ; but I neither knew nor intended that your effects, and your money, should be touched. This being so, you have a right to make your claim, which I shall highly approve ; and Schmit must not expect any protection from me, on this subject.

I know not who this Bredo is, of whom you speak. He has told you truth. The sword and death have made dreadful ravages among us ! And, what is worse, we are not yet at the end of the tragedy. You may easily imagine the effect which shocks so cruel have produced on me. I am obliged to wrap myself up in my stoicism as well as I can. Flesh and blood often revolts against this tyrannical empire of reason, but they are obliged to yield. Were you to see me, you would scarcely know me. I am old, decrepit, wrinkled, and grey-headed. I lose my teeth,
and

and my cheerfulness. Should things continue as they are, all that will remain of me will be the mania of writing poetry, with an inviolable attachment to my duty, and to the few virtuous men with whom I am acquainted. The race I run is difficult, and strewed with brambles and thorns. I have felt every kind of woe which can afflict humanity, and often have repeated the beautiful lines—

*Heureux qui retiré dans le temple des sages, &c. **

Numerous works have appeared here, which are attributed to you : *the Solomon*, which you had the malignity to have burnt by the parliament ; a comedy, *La femme qui a raison* † ; and likewise a Funeral Oration on Friar Berthier. I have no return to make to all these pieces, except those which I send you, and by which they certainly are not equalled. But I make every kind of war on my enemies : the more they persecute me, the more work do I cut out for them ; and, should I perish, it shall be under heaps of their libels, and among splintered arms on the field of battle. I give you my word I will travel in good company to that country in which your name is unknown, and where Boyer and Turenne are equals.

* Happy he who retired in the temple of the sages, &c.

† The wife in the right.

I shall be very glad to receive you. I wish you every happiness ; but where, how, and when ? These are problems which neither D'Alembert nor the great Newton can resolve.

Adieu. Live contentedly and undisturbed, and forget not those whom the devil, or some malignant fiend, continues to haunt.

FREDERIC.

L E T T E R CCLXXXVI.

From the King.

Freyberg, March 20, 1760.

WHAT, charming madmen, do you claim ?
Say, is it peace, or war, you name ?
You talk of peace ; but what are words,
While you defy our slaughter'ring swords ?
By land would you retrieve, from me,
The losses you 've sustain'd by sea ?
Ah me ! And am I doom'd to face
Of heroes such a thund'ring race ?
In onset dreadful, fierce in ire,
I view their valour, and admire !
For clemency, some summer's day,
Their kneeling enemies shall pray !
Nay more, let fortune be but kind,
Their purses shall be fill'd—with wind.

You talk of this cruel war very much at your ease.

ease. No doubt the contributions with which your lordship of Ferney furnishes France, strengthens the constancy of the ministry, and thus it is prolonged. Refuse *the Most Christian* your subsidies, and it will end. With respect to the propositions of peace, which you mention, I find them so extravagant that I consign them over to the inhabitants of Saint Luke's, who will return a worthy answer. What shall I say of your ministers?

These Giants are mad, or these Giants are Gods!

Let them assure themselves that I will as madly defend myself, and leave the rest to chance.

The tragedy you fit to view,
And ne'er to his forget your cue.
Authors and kings are much alike ;
Offend them, and they 're sure to strike.
Our blows bring tears indeed, while yours
The laughter of the world infuses.
A furious poet and a fool
Alike are worthy ridicule.
If Pallas to the test should bring
Those bedlamites, a bard and king,
To those who make men laugh she'd give
Preference o'er those who will not let them live.

I will pay you to the last farthing, that Louis of the windmill * may have wherewith to make

* Louis XV. was stationed near a windmill, on the memorable day of Fontenoy; whence he acquired this epithet. T. war.

war. Add the tenth to the twentieth; impose new capitation taxes; create places for sale; in a word, do whatever you can; and, in despite of all your efforts, never shall you have a peace, signed by this hand, but on conditions honourable to my nation. Your ministry, puffed up with vanity and folly, may depend on the truth of these sacramental words.

“An oracle more sure than that of Chalcas.”

Adieu. Live happily; and remember, while you are exerting all your efforts for the destruction of Prussia, that no man has less merited them than myself, either from you or your French.

L E T T E R CCLXXXVII.

From the King.

Freyberg, April 3, 1760.

BY what rage is it that you are still possessed against Maupertuis? You accuse him of having betrayed me; but know, he took care to have the poems sealed up, and they were sent to me after his death. He was incapable of any indiscretion so disrespectful toward me.

Let

Let persecuting malice cease ;
Leave Maupertuis to sleep in peace :
Quit accusation's stale pretence ;
Truth rises arm'd in his defence.
Rather let him your model be,
In faith and noble charity :
Of pardon he gave worthy proof
For libels fram'd beneath my roof.

Oh shame ! Oh world ! Can he ! Voltaire !
Apollo's son ! The Muses care !
Can Genius thus be carrion-fed,
And glut her rancour on the dead ?
Thus croaks the crow, and gathers where
The putrid heap infects the air.

In acts like these no more I know
The friend of Truth, or Error's foe,
Or virtues pompously display'd,
Or author of the Henriade.
Blush scarlet deep, if blush you can ;
Oh blush ! and once more be a man.

Peace is still your subject ; but on what conditions ? Certainly those by whom it is proposed have no desire that it should take effect. What reasoning is theirs ! Give up the country of Cleves because the inhabitants are fools ! What would these ministers say, were any one to demand Champagne because the proverb says — “ Ninety-nine sheep and a man of Champagne make a hundred ? ” Let us talk no more on such ridiculous projects. If the French minister

minister be not possessed by ten legions of Austrian devils, peace he must make. You have put me in a passion ; your pardon will be obtained by your repentance. In the mean time I abandon you to remorse, and to the avenging furies who haunt the calumniator, till that natural religion which you call innate shall renew those traces which she formerly had imprinted on your soul.

Vale.

L E T T E R CCLXXXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE,

The chateau of Tourney, near Geneva,
April 21, 1760.

AN insignificant monk of Saint Justus thus addressed Charles V.—“ Is not your sacred master wearyed by disturbing the world ; must you also disturb a poor monk in his cell ? ” I am the monk ; but you have not, like Charles V. renounced the wretchedness of human grandeurs. How cruel is it in you to tell me that I calumniate Maupertuis, when I inform you it was reported, after his death, that the works of the philosopher of Sans-Souci had been found in

in his strong box ! If in effect they were there discovered, would not that prove that he had guarded them faithfully ; that he had communicated them to no one ; that they had been purloined by a bookseller ; and that persons unjustly accused would thus have been discredited ? How was it possible I should know that Maupertuis had returned them to you ? What interest have I to speak ill of him ? What is his person, or what his memory, to me ? What wrong have I done him, by informing your majesty that he faithfully preserved your works, as long as he lived ? I myself think only of death ; my hour approaches ; do not let it be disturbed by unjust reproach, and harsh accusation, which are the more sensibly felt because they come from you.

You have done me harm enough. You have for ever embroiled me with the king of France. You have occasioned the loss of my places and pensions. You have ill treated me, at Frankfort ; and, with me, an innocent woman, a respectable woman, who was dragged through the streets and thrown into prison : and now, while honouring me with your letters, you poison the sweetness of this consolation by the bitterness of reproach. Is it possible that you should treat me thus ! I who have three years successively, though ineffectually, been endeavouring to serve
you,

you, from no other motive but that of acting in conformity to my feelings.

The greatest mischief which your works have done, is the slander to which they have given birth, among the numerous enemies of philosophy, in Europe. "Philosophers," say they, "can neither live in peace nor live together. "Here have we a king who does not believe in "Jesus Christ: he invites another unbeliever "to his court, whom he ill treats. There is no "charity among these pretended philosophers; "and God makes them the instruments of each "other's punishment."

This is the general cry; this is every where in print; and, while fanatics remain united, philosophers are dispersed and unhappy. At the court of Versailles, and elsewhere, I am accused of having encouraged you to write against the Christian religion. Yet am I to suffer reproach from you; yes, to the insults of fanatics this affliction is added. Well may I abhor the world; and happy am I to be out of it, in these my solitary domains! I shall bless the day when dying I shall cease to suffer, especially to suffer by you. Yet even then shall I wish you all the happiness of which you are susceptible, and which philosophy only can procure you, amid a life so stormy, should fortune hereafter permit you long

long to cultivate that fund of wisdom which you possess ; wisdom admirable in itself, but injured by passions which infuse gall into your soul ; and, in fine, wisdom which is injured by that unfortunate pleasure, which you have ever taken, in humbling other men, and in speaking and writing things which most could wound ; a pleasure unworthy of yourself ; and the more so because you are raised above them, both by your birth and your uncommon talents.

These are truths of which you no doubt are sensible. Pardon the utterance of them ! Pardon an old man who has not long to live ! He has spoken with the greater confidence, because, conscious himself of failings infinitely greater than yours, though less dangerous from his obscurity, he cannot be by you suspected of supposing himself exempt from error, and therefore of having a right to complain of your mistakes. For these he weeps, as well as for his own ; and it is his greatest wish hereafter to repair, before he dies, the fatal wanderings of a deceitful imagination, by sincerely praying that a man so great as you may be as happy, and as great, in all things, as he deserves to be.

LETTER CCLXXXIX.

*From the King.*The Porcelain camp at Meissen,
May 1, 1760.

OF Cæsar's art and yours I once
Enamour'd was ; in both a dunce,
In both I've fail'd. How few are seen
In hist'ry's page, except Eugene,
Gustavus, Condé, great Turrenne,
But shrink beside this first of men,
This Cæsar ! As for you, I own,
You're worthy found of Virgil's throne :
Till now how many a day and year
Have flown since men beheld his peer !
A fable false, a moral wrong,
Debase the noble Tasso's song.
But beauties, not defects, pervade
Voltaire's immortal Henriade.

Within my narrow sphere confin'd,
My claims are small ; my feeble mind
The warrior's or the poet's art
Can never reach. An upright heart,
A sense of human woes, I claim :
Grant these, and I relinquish fame.

You demand poetry from me ; which is as if
the ocean where to ask water from a rivulet.
Here however I send you an Ode to the Germans,
an Epistle to D'Alembert, another Epistle on
the

the commencement of the campaign, and a Tale. These have all served to amuse me, but I cannot forbear to repeat that they have no other value. He who would write for posterity must write like you, Racine, or Boileau: and what is not worthy of posterity ought not to be published.

You joke on the subject of peace: were joking necessary, you know that, since I have read Ariosto, I have taken an aversion to my lord of Mentz; and, since the adventure of Lisbon, the church cannot pay too dearly for the horrors which she protects, and the offence she gives. But, let the duke de Choiseul think what he pleases, he must, and very attentively too, lend an ear to what I have imagined. I shall not further explain myself, but in less than two months we shall see—the scene totally changed in Europe: nay you shall yourself confess I was not driven to my last resource, and that I had good reason to refuse your duke my park of Cleves.

Know therefore, good sir count of Tourney*, as know you do, that, in Paradise, the first sub-

* *Monsieur le comte de Tourney*—It is an idiom, in the French language, to say Mr. the count, Mr. the duke, Mr. the marshal, &c. and it is here used in a jocular manner. Our old ballads and romances often have the phrase sir knight, sir earl, &c. T.

jects of our first father were four-footed animals. You are not unacquainted with the attachment which many people have for animals ; dogs, monkeys, cats, or parrots : and I hope you will further allow, were all the sacred and most clement majesties, who govern this earth, to renounce those among their very humble subjects who do not possess common sense, their courts would immediately be cleared, and their slaves would disappear. To what a state would you reduce them ! By whose aid would they make war ? Who should cultivate the fields ; who should labour at trades, &c. &c.? Paradise and Eden therefore are, in my sense, nothing but an allegory ; which signifies that, for two men of understanding, a thousand others are found, who have been fabricated by father Lourdis*.

With respect to your duke, sir count, you praise him awkwardly, in my opinion, when you affirm he writes verses like me. I am not so destitute of taste as not to perceive mine are of no great value. You would praise him better, could you persuade me, which would be a thing of difficulty, that the said duke were not possessed by Austrians. I will maintain,

* *Frère Lourdis* (or Stupid) is one of the characters in Voltaire's *La Pucelle*, or the Maid of Orleans, in which this holy friar is made the messenger of St. Denis to the temple of Folly. T:

to the last, that neither Socrates nor the just Aristides would ever have consented that the Grecian republic should be in the least dismembered; and in this I imitate the manner of thinking of these sages.

This is the time in which I must display every art of politics, and of war. The robbers, that make war upon me, have set me examples, which I will literally follow. There will be no congress at Breda; nor will I lay down my arms till I shall have made three more campaigns. The rascals will see they have insulted my good dispositions, and that we will not sign a peace till the king of England shall be at Paris, and I at Vienna. Send this intelligence to your little duke; he may turn it into a very neat epigram; while you, good sir count, shall be obliged to pay the twentieths till your finances are all extinct.

They have made me angry. I have summoned my whole forces, and all these knaves, with their impertinent antics, shall be taught whom they have sported with.

The count de Saint Germain* is a thing only to

* An adventurer, who affirmed he was immortal, that he was present with Jesus Christ on Mount Calvary, and that he was at the council of Trente. He lived partly at the expence of dupes, who supposed him an adept in alchymy, and partly at that of the ministers who employed him as a spy.

be laughed at. Your duke will not long remain minister : remember he has been two springs in office, which is an extravagant thing in France, and almost unexampled. Ministers have not taken root in this reign.

I have sent you my Charles XII. I have only taken off twelve copies, which I have given to my friends ; I have not one left for myself. It is a kind of work proper to be read in small companies, but not written for the public. I am but a dilettante in everything. I may give my opinion on the great masters ; I may judge of you, and utter my sentiments on the merits of Virgil : but I am not formed to utter them to the public, because I have not attained perfection in the art. Should I be mistaken, an indulgent company would correct, while they should pardon, my blunders ; but not so the public. It is necessary to be more circumspect, in writing to the world, than when addressing our friends. My works are like table conversation, where men think aloud, and where they speak unconstrainedly, without any one taking offence at contradiction.

When I have a few moments leisure, I am seized with the disease of scribbling ; nor can I forbear to indulge myself in this trifling pleasure : it amuses me, it unbends my mind, and I find myself better disposed, afterward, for the labour of business.

To

To speak dispassionately, you may well believe I was not in so much haste for peace as was imagined, in France ; nor ought I to have been addressed in an arbitrary tone. They will certainly bite their nails ; and, with respect to myself, or rather to the interests of the kingdom I govern, there is no loss sustained.

Adieu. Live in peace. May my verses throw you into a sound sleep, and inspire agreeable dreams ! Should you think proper to point out the gross mistakes, this would still be something ; to correct at present costs me nothing.

I recommend you, good sir count, to the protection of the most holy and immaculate Virgin, and to the young gentleman, her son, the —

F R E D E R I C.

N. B. Those who study the protocol of ceremony may take example by the end of this letter, and add this new turn to the chancery style. Should you wish to communicate it to his holiness, perhaps you will give him pleasure, and it may be of use to the chancery briefs.

LETTER CCXC.

From the King.

Meissen, May 12, 1760.

I VERY well know I have defects, nay very great ones ; and I assure you I do not treat myself tenderly ; when examining myself, I grant no quarter. But I own this labour would be more effectual, were I in a situation in which my mind had not to suffer shocks so impetuous, and agitations so violent, as those to which I have for some time past been exposed, and to which I probably still shall be.

Peace has taken flight with the butterflies, and is thought of no more. New efforts are made in all parts, and it is determined to fight *in secula seculorum.*

I make no enquiries into the past. Your conduct to me has beyond doubt been very wrong, nor would it have been tolerated by any philosopher. I have pardoned you every thing, and I even wish to forget. But had you not had to contend with a lunatic, enamoured with your fine genius, you certainly would not have escaped so well. Let this therefore suffice, and let me hear no more mention of your niece ; I am weary of it ; she has not so much merit, to conceal her defects, as her uncle. We speak of the

old woman of Moliere, but no one will ever talk of the niece of Voltaire. As to my verses and my rhapsodies, I think not of them : I have other affairs at present to mind ; and I have divorced myself from the Muses, till times more tranquil shall come.

The campaign will begin in the month of June, and will be no laughing matter ; we shall find more cause to weep. Remember that *Phibibus** is on his journey. Should not a little duke, possessed by a hundred legions of Austrian demons, speedily have himself exorcised, let him beware of the traveller, who may write strange things to his sublime emperor.

I shall make every kind of war on my enemies ; they cannot shut me up in the Bastille. After all the ill will they have shown against me, the revenge of ridicule is but feeble.

It is said the Parisians are cutting new capers on the tomb of the abbé Paris ; that all the good books are burnt, at the metropolis ; and that the people there are more mad than ever, not with an amiable excess of joy, but possessed by a gloomy and taciturn lunacy. Of all the nations in Europe, yours is the most inconsistent : you have much wit, but no connected ideas. Such has France appeared to be, through her whole history.

* The title of a work by the king of Prussia.

This

This must be an indelible character impressed upon the people : in the long succession of French monarchs, there are no exceptions ; except during some part of the reign of Louis XIV. The reign of Henry IV. was neither sufficiently tranquil nor of sufficient continuance to be mentioned. During the administration of Richelieu, a consistency of plan had been remarked, as well as vigour of execution : but these are certainly short periods of wisdom, during so long a history of follies.

France has produced Descartes, and Malle-branche, but no such men as Leibnitz, Locke, and Newton. In revenge, you surpass all other nations in good taste ; and I enlist under your banners in all that relates to acuteness of discernment, and a judicious and scrupulous selection of true beauties, among such as have only a brilliant appearance. This is a great step in the progress of the belles lettres ; but more is necessary.

I have read many of the new books that appear, and have regretted the time that I have bestowed on them. I have met with nothing good, except a work by D'Alembert ; particularly his Elements of Philosophy, and his Encyclopedic Discourse*. The other books that have fallen in my way are only worthy of the fire.

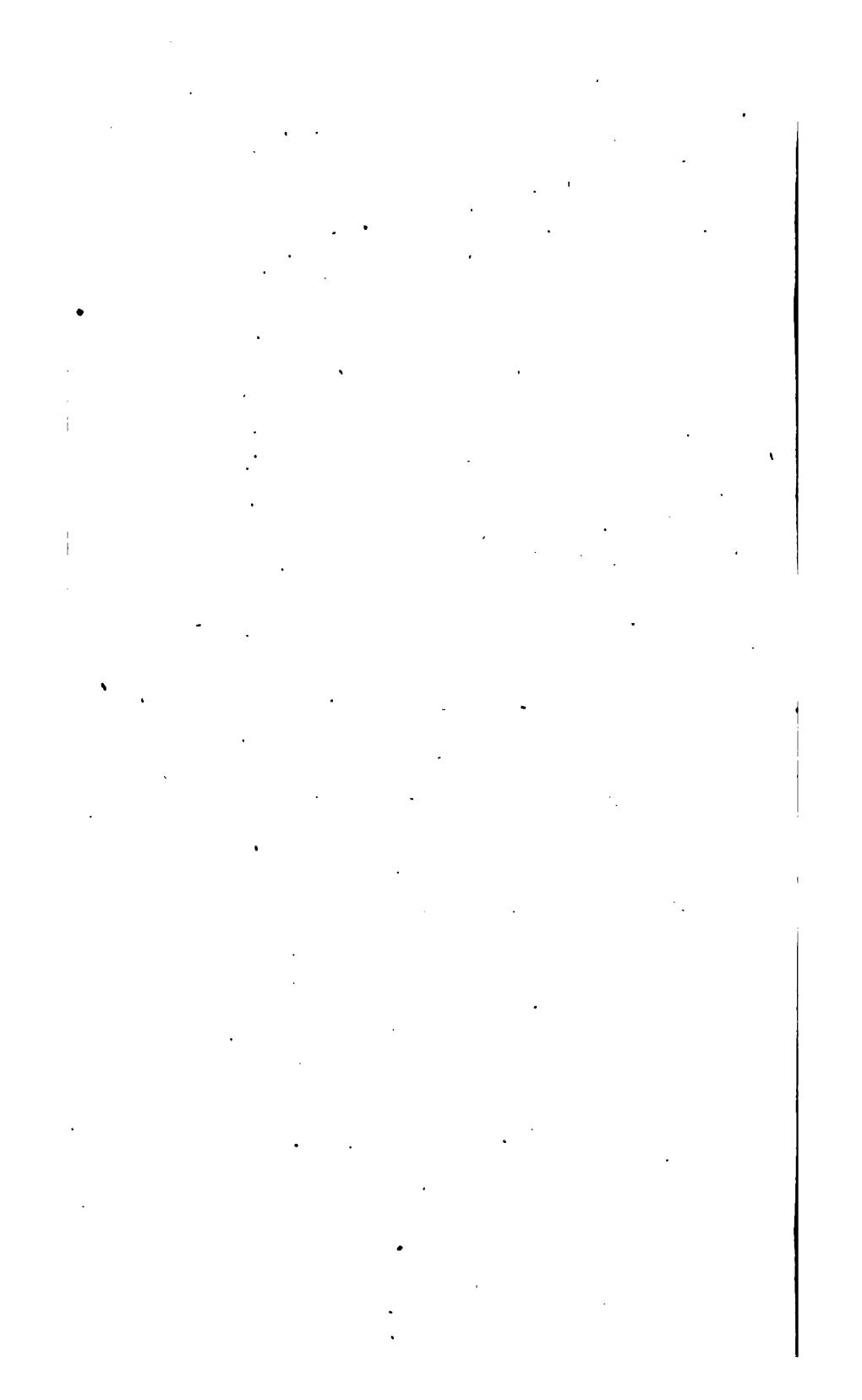
* The preface, as I imagine, to the Encyclopedie. T.

Adieu. Live peaceful in your retreat, and do not talk of dying. You are but sixty-two, and your mind is still full of that fire which animates and sustains the body. You will bury me, and with me half of the present generation : you will have the pleasure to write a satiric couplet on my tomb, at which I shall not be vexed. I previously give you absolution. You will not do ill to begin at present to prepare your materials ; perhaps they may be of use sooner than you imagine. For my part, I shall tell Virgil, in the shades below, that there is a Frenchman who has surpassed him in his own art. I shall say as much to Sophocles, and to Euripides, and shall talk of your history to Thucydides, and to Quintus Curtius of your Charles XII. Perhaps I shall get myself lapidated by all these shades, envious that a single man has in himself combined their various merits. But, to console them, Maupertuis shall read the Akakia, to Zoilus, in a corner.

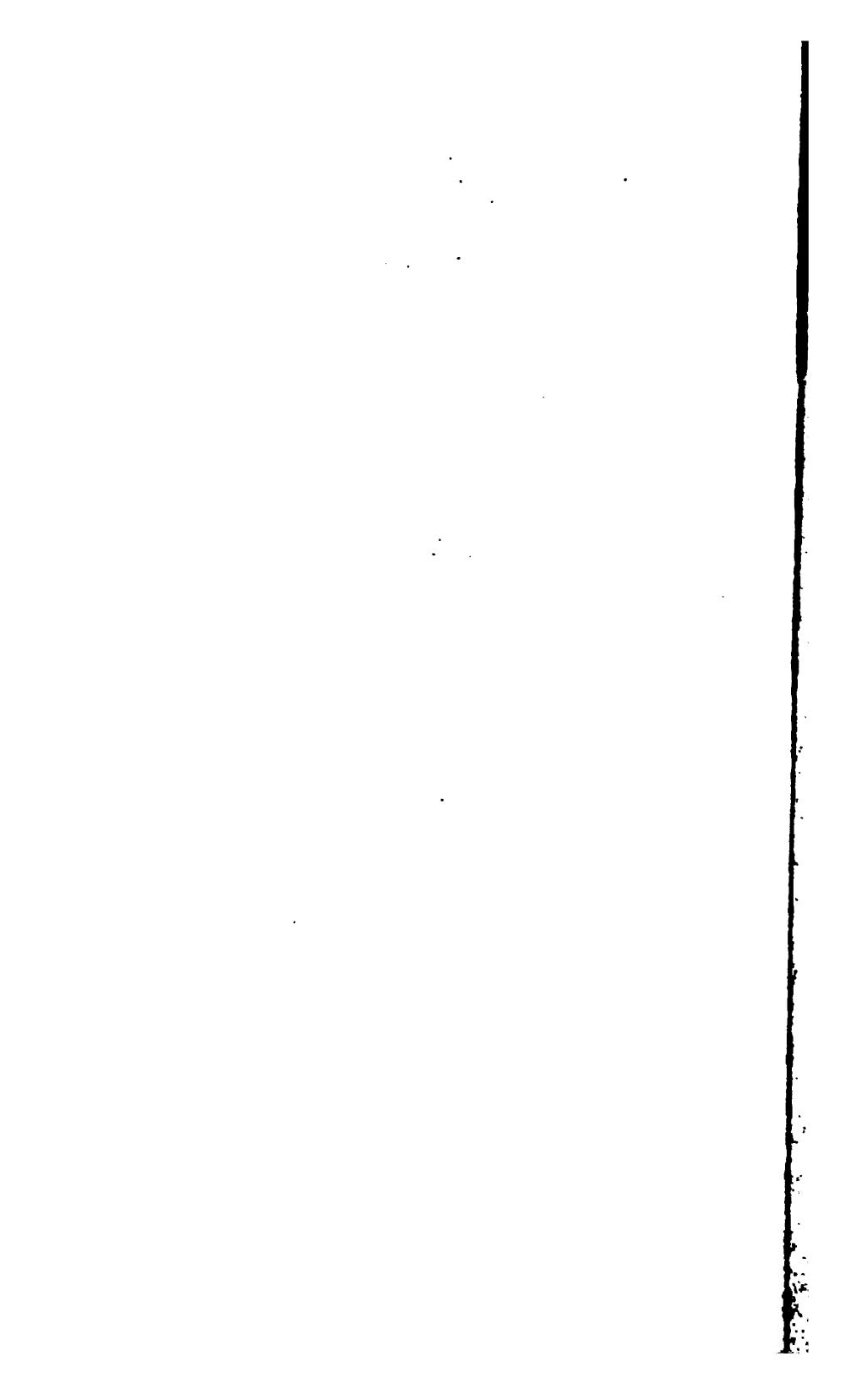
Letters written to the indiscreet must have a *remore** ; this is the only means of preventing their being read at the corners of streets, and in the market place.

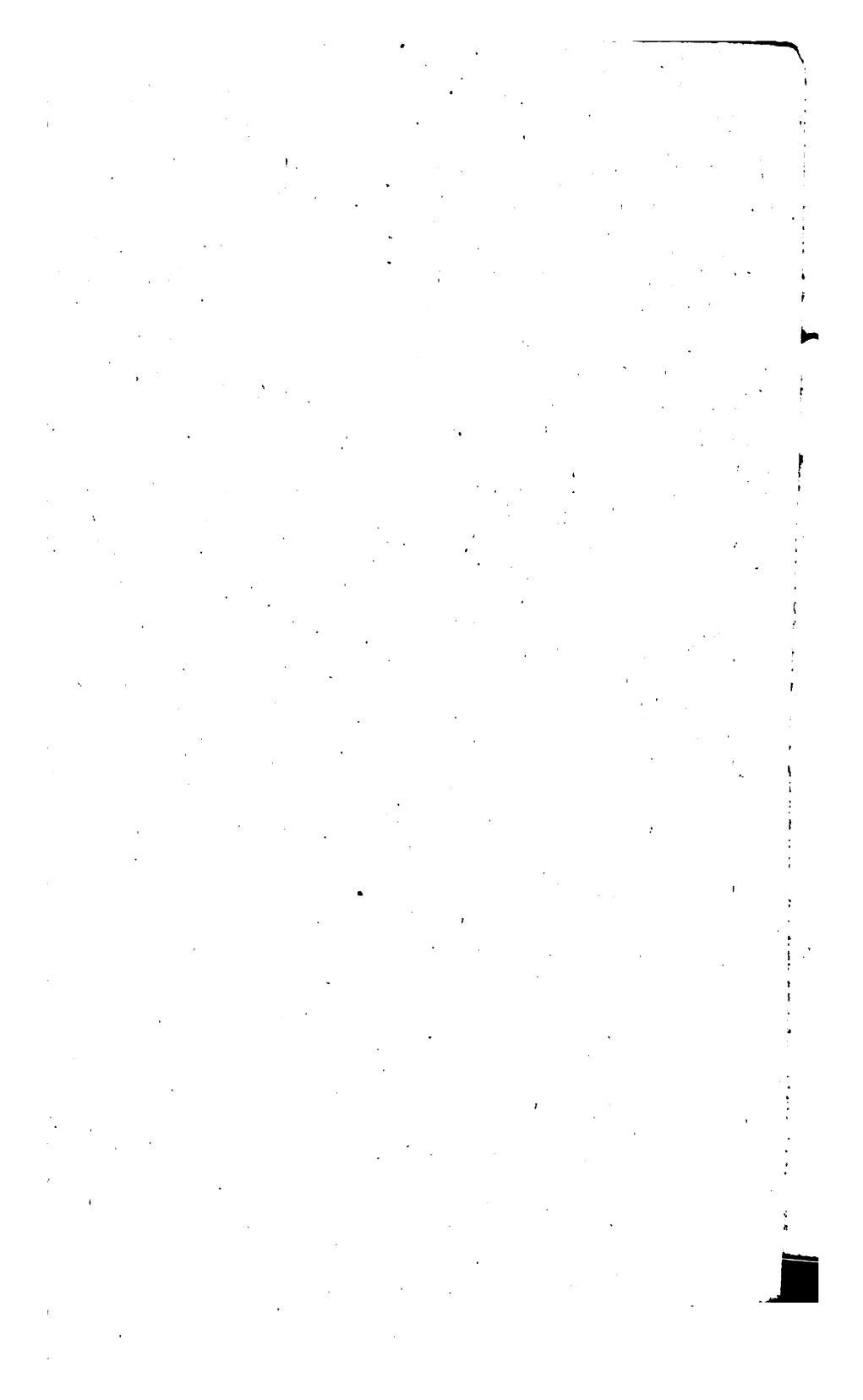
FREDERIC.

* The sucking fish, supposed by the ancients to have power to stop a ship under sail, or a whale swimming ; and figuratively used here to stop the tongue of the imprudent. T.









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